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11th Annual Edition

THE YEAR'S BEST S-F

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BY

ARTHUR C. CLARKE • ALFRED JARRY
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DONALD BARTHELMÉ • JORGÉ LUIS BORGES
JOHN CIARDI • HARVEY JACOBS • FRITZ LEIBER
ART BUCHWALD • AND MANY MORE

EDITED BY JUDITH MERRIL

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IT

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INTRODUCTION

I generally skip introductions myself—at least until after I read the book. But I hope you're reading this one, because you may be disappointed otherwise.

This is not a collection of science-fiction stories.

It does have some science fiction in it—I think. (It gets a little more difficult each year to decide which ones are *really* science fiction —and frankly I don't much try any more.)

There are two selections full of good honest hard-science stuff. The biochemical one is a sort of bible story, and the astrophysical one is about an astral pataphysician. And there are a couple of planet-type stories by Leiber and Clarke—two solid science-fiction names if ever there were—about life (or death) on (or in or around) the moon.

I can also offer a galore of space ships, a gaggle of monstrous or otherwise odd alien creatures, and a fair-sized battalion of robots and other kinds of thinking machines, as well as some telepathists and general Wielders of Powers, some disembodied entities, and a mess of mythological and magical beings (one giant, one sorceress, a devil-sticks dancer, and assorted semi- and demigods).

But if you think that makes the book a collection of *fantasy* and science fiction, I'm afraid I still have to beg off—unless you choose to Include under "fantasy" everything that is not rigidly "realistic" — assuming you know what *that* means. I don't.

What this book is, is a collection of imaginative speculative writing reflecting, I believe, clearly and sharply the problems and conflicts of civilized man today, and his hopes and apprehensions for the future.

The stories and poems and essays here have been selected from as wide a range as I could cover of books and periodicals published here and in England last year. About half the entries are from the genre magazines. The rest are from books and from such diverse sources as *Mademoiselle* and *Escapade, The Colorado Quarterly* and the *Washington Post, Playboy* and the *Saturday Review* (and *Ambit* and *King* in England). The youngest author is an eighteen-year-old college freshman; the oldest a ninety-three-year-old (if still alive) Parisian legend.

You will, I think, find the attitudes, treatments, topics, as varied as the sources.

Some of it is even science fiction.

Judith Merril

There is nothing I can say about this story that Mr. Tilley does not say better in it. There is nothing I can say about Tilley that he does not say more engagingly himself, in the note following his story.

* * * *

SOMETHING ELSE
ROBERT J. TILLEY

The equatorial region of the planet that the *Cosmos Queen* crashed on was liberally decorated with mountains, one of which it missed by a relative hairsbreadth before disintegrating noisily in a wide clearing that separated the forest from its stolid granite foot. The dust and wreckage took some time to settle, and it was several minutes after that that Dr. Sidney Williams, having surmised correctly that he was the sole survivor, emerged from the only section of the ship that had remained in one piece. He gazed forlornly at the alien landscape.

Locally, this consisted of multicolored and highly attractive flora, backed by a picturesquely purple range of hills. Dr. Williams shuddered, hastily turned his back, and rooted feverishly among the bits and pieces until he found the sub-wave transmitter, a tangle of wires and dented casing that even his inexperienced eye told him was out of order. He kicked it, yelped, then limped across to a seat that projected miraculously upright among the debris. Slumped on it, he glowered at the landscape again.

He mistrusted nature in the raw. His first experience of its treachery had included being stung by a wasp, blundering innocently into a bed of nettles and being chased by a cow. The result of this encounter, a supposed treat that had been provided by his parents when he was six years old, had been to instill a deep loathing of all things green and insect-ridden. Concrete, plastic and the metallic hubbub of urban existence formed his natural habitat, and he was unhappy away from it. The travelling necessitated by his lecturing chores was a nuisance, but he simply stuffed himself with tranquillizers and kept his eyes firmly closed most of the time between cities.

His undertaking of a tour of the Alphard system had been occasioned by sheer financial necessity. Unrelenting pressure from his wife for the benefits to be derived from a further step up the professional and social scale, coupled with the recent unearthing in Singapore of a reputedly complete collection of the prolific Fletcher Henderson band's original 78-rpm recordings for which a mere cr. 5000 was being asked, had coincided with the offer from the Department of Cultural History (Colonial Division). Following reassurances that accidents were nowadays virtually unheard of and that unlimited sedation facilities were available, he signed the agreement with a shaking hand, packed his personal belongings and

equipment and left.

The ship hadn't even got halfway to its destination. Due to some virtually unheard of mechanical mishap, they had been forced back into normal space on the outskirts of a small and obscure planetary system, short of fuel and in dire need of emergency repairs. It had been decided that these could be tackled more effectively on the ground, an unfortunate choice in view of the resultant situation.

Dr. Williams got up and wandered about the wreckage, kicking bits out of the way as he went. He didn't know whether to cut his throat then or wait until later, but in the meantime he didn't want to sit looking at the surroundings any longer than he had to. They both depressed and terrified him. He could feel the ominous proximity of greenery and smell its undisguised, unfiltered presence, hear its gentle stirring and rustling at the perimeter of the clearing, see its fragmentary movement from the corner of his eye as he moved, head down, among the forlorn remains of the ship.

What did it conceal? Life? It had to, he supposed. What sort of life? Peaceful? Threatening? A timid, herbivorous creature that was shyly concealing itself, or a prowling, slavering carnivore that watched him leeringly from the green darkness, savoring his obvious defenselessness, waiting only until his fear was sweet enough in its nostrils and then emerging to take him in its claws (tentacles?), preparatory to rending and devouring him . . .

He swallowed, and looked around for something sharp. A mustard-colored, familiar shape caught his eye, protruding from beneath a crumpled section of paneling.

Dr. Williams croaked an ejaculation of relief, partially occasioned by the reorientation gained from finding something familiar and also because it appeared at first glance to be undamaged. He dropped to his knees and eased the paneling to one side, his mouth dry with excitement, crooning softly and trying to keep his hands steady.

The case itself was thick with dust, but intact. The contents, though—He swallowed again. He wasn't worried overmuch about his clarinet, snugly cushioned on all sides in its special compartment, and it was doubtful that anything had happened to the spools themselves, but their playing apparatus was another matter. Although it was almost completely transistorized it inevitably contained a minimal number of moving parts, and despite their being made to withstand moderately rough handling they had recently been subjected to rather more than they could be reasonably expected to survive.

He unlocked the lid and opened it. Excellent insulation had ensured that the contents had remained firmly in place, but that in itself was no guarantee against havoc having been wreaked at any one of several vital points. He licked his lips, said a brief silent prayer, and

eased the machine up and out of the box.

Nothing tinkled. He held his breath, and shook it by his ear, very gently. Still nothing. Dr. Williams placed it on the ground, and stared at it hopefully.

As far as he could tell without actually trying it, it was undamaged. Had he been a man of mechanical aptitude, Dr. Williams would no doubt have carried out at least a cursory inspection as a precautionary measure before switching it on, but he was not. All he knew about its workings was that it was mercifully battery operated and that it carried a two-year guarantee covering mechanical failure.

He wondered how many million miles away the nearest authorized repair agency was, and laughed, hysterically. If the machine was broken, it at least meant that further procrastination regarding his future would be quite pointless. Operative, it could at least save him from going insane as long as the batteries lasted (the case held several spares); also, it would almost certainly distract any marauding locals, if not exactly deter them. It was also possible, he was reluctantly forced to concede, that it would actually attract them, but that was a chance he would simply have to take. With the solace that he could derive from it, life would be tolerable for at least a brief while; without it, unthinkable.

With a fixed and slightly demented smile on his face, Dr. Williams picked out a spool at random, fitted it, and pressed the on button. There was a click, a faint whisper of irremovable surface wear from the original recording that he had always found an endearingly essential part of the performance, and Duke Ellington's *Ko Ko* racketed into the stillness of the alien afternoon.

Dr. Williams sat cross-legged in front of the machine and laughed, deliriously and uncontrollably. Eyes closed, he immersed himself thankfully in the brassily percussive clamor that now drove back his darkly threatening surroundings, warming himself at the blessed fire of its familiarity. He roared ecstatic encouragement to the ensemble, whooped maniacally at the brief solo passages, and accompanied the final chorus with frenzied palm-slapping of his knees.

The performance crashed to a close, but Dr. Williams' cackling laugh still held the sombre clutter of the forest at bay as he switched off the machine with a triumphant forefinger and sprawled back among the debris. He had been spared. It meant only a brief respite, it was true; weeks, a month or two possibly, but with the pick of his life's researching to sustain him, his final days would be made tolerable, perhaps in a bitter-sweet way even happy. He would smother his loneliness with the greatest performances of the archaic musical form that he loved and which had been his life's work, seeking out each nuance, each subtle harmonic and rhythmic

coloration, so that when the time came, when the batteries were finally exhausted, then he would take his leave smilingly and with a full heart, grateful for the opportunity that Fate had seen fit to—

Some distance away, the opening bars of Duke Ellington's *Ko Ko* grunted springily into being beyond the muffling barrier of the trees.

Dr. Williams leaped to his feet, a galvanized reflex that toppled him again immediately, as his legs were still crossed. Slightly stunned by his fall, he sprawled amid the wreckage, listening with a mixture of disbelief, puzzlement and sheer terror to the unmistakable (and yet oddly different) Ellingtonian voicing of brass and reeds that blared from the surrounding forest.

Despite his confusion, a small corner of Dr. Williams' mind analytically considered the possible causes of this phenomenon. His initial wild guess, that the construction of the local terrain produced some sort of freak echo effect, was hastily rejected. He was no geologist, but he was pretty certain that an echo that took approximately four minutes to become activated was quite beyond credence.

That seemed to leave two possibilities, the first of which was tenuous to the point of invisibility, the second simply distasteful. Either (1) another castaway such as himself, coincidentally equipped with identical machinery and recordings, had chosen to respond in kind upon hearing Dr. Williams' announcement of his presence, or (2) he was already crazy.

The music, he realized, was becoming louder. It was now accompanied by other sounds—the crashing of displaced undergrowth, a muffled thunder that could have been the tread of heavy feet. He felt the ground vibrate beneath him, a gigantic pulse-beat that was, he was suddenly and sickly aware, in rhythmic sympathy with the performance, matching perfectly the churning swing of guitar, bass and drums.

Giddily, he pushed himself to his feet. Whatever it was, delusion or nightmare reality, he had to get away.

He bundled the machine back into its container, and glared wildly around him. An opening the size of a manhole cover showed blackly at the foot of the nearby cliff. Without pausing to consider that it might be inhabited, Dr. Williams lurchingly covered the fifty yards that separated him from it and dived inside.

It was a small, round cave, little bigger than a telephone booth, and mercifully empty. He huddled as far back from the entrance as he could, clutching the machine protectively in front of him, and peered squintingly out into the clearing.

Beyond the wreckage of the ship, he saw the greenery part. To the accompaniment of shouting trumpets and thrusting saxophones, a

figure emerged into the open. It was approximately the size of a full-grown elephant, bright cerise, and the upper part of its unpleasantly lumpy body was surrounded by a sinuously weaving pattern of tendrils that ended in fringed, cup-like openings. It was apparently headless, but two eyes, nostrils and a generous mouth were visible behind the threshing fronds. Four squat legs supported its enormous bulk, each the diameter of a fair sized tree.

It was rather, Dr. Williams sweatingly concluded, like a cross between an outsized potato sack and an octopus, but whatever it was one thing was abundantly and deafeningly certain. It was the source of the music that now rang about the clearing in unshielded, cacophonous triumph, uproarious accompaniment to the creature's ground-shaking gait.

It trotted cumbrously round the wreckage, blaring as it went. As it passed Dr. Williams' hiding place, it tendered a creditable imitation of the initial statement by double-bass, muscular strumming that came to an abrupt and sinister halt as it passed out of his sight.

He shrank into a near-fetal position as one of the cuplike objects thrust its way through the entrance. It hesitated in front of him, then pounced, an exuberant movement that strangely reminded the almost fainting Dr. Williams of a small dog that he had once owned.

The cup explored him, the individual serrations on its edge prodding and stroking like independent, curious fingers. Another entered the cave and joined in the inspection. Their touch was warm, dry, and not unpleasant, and they gave off a mildly lemon-like odor.

After what seemed an eternity, they retreated. Dr. Williams steeled himself for the next move, fervently wishing that he'd cut his throat when he had the opportunity. None of this, of course, was real. He must still be on the ship, delirious—possibly even dying—from the effects of the crash. Perhaps they hadn't crashed at all. Perhaps this was simply some atrocious nightmare engendered by his fear of travel and its imagined consequences. The ingredients, after all, were all there; his lone survival, the grotesquely impossible musical performance and its equally ludicrous perpetrator that now lurked outside his place of shelter, his . . .

Ko Ko pumped its way into existence again, this time containing a distinctly alien added quality. Instead of its customary animal-like elation, it sounded positively plaintive.

Dr. Williams listened for a brief awestruck period, then smeared the sweat from his eyes with a wobbling hand and tried to think.

Accepting purely for the sake of argument that the situation was real, what for pity's sake *was* the creature that now sat outside the cave making noises like the long-dead Duke Ellington band in full cry? He laboriously reviewed its actions, trying to build up some sort of

composite picture that would give him a clue as to its nature and purpose.

The conclusions that he eventually drew, while outside the fifth straight rendition of *Ko Ko* thundered towards its conclusion, were absurd but inescapable. Somehow, in some multidexterous way that was quite beyond his imagining, it was capable of memorizing or recording what it heard and then repeating it in minute detail, even to the extent of approximately simulating the individual timbres necessary to achieve the final collective sound. This was sheer lunacy, of course, but Dr. Williams doggedly faced up to the fact that on the present evidence there was no other possible explanation. Secondly, it was either quite young or relatively stupid. Its attitude was clearly that of a dog or small child that wanted to play, the unmistakably plaintive note now having taken on a whining quality that grated unpleasantly on his already highly strung nerves.

His experience of both dogs and children had been limited of late years, a situation largely dictated by his wife who had no interest in either, but he knew that both had a tendency to sulk when denied their immediate interest. Discipline, of course, was the correct treatment, but he couldn't see how he was going to apply any under the existing circumstances. All things considered, cooperation seemed the better part of valor, a decision aided by the fact that absence of anything that could be remotely construed as aggressive intent had at last permitted Dr. Williams' curiosity to at least partially overcome his fear.

He opened the container, placed the machine on the floor of the cave, selected and fitted another spool, and pressed the on button again. *Potato Head Blues* by the Louis Armstrong Hot Seven clattered from the speaker, well-nigh deafening him until he made hasty adjustments to the controls. Beyond the cave entrance, he could detect signs of excited movement. A tentacle tip appeared, jigging solemnly, shortly to be joined by others.

Dr. Williams took a deep breath, said yet another silent but fervent prayer, and crawled outside with the machine blaring under one arm.

The greeting that he received, he had no doubt, was friendly. Tendrils patted, smoothed and tickled him from all angles, sometimes clumsily, but all with a marked absence of animosity. Dr. Williams clung grimly to the still performing machine and bore the buffeting with as much equanimity as he could muster, flinching only occasionally.

The music chirruped to a close, provoking obvious consternation and an abrupt halt to the amiably excited pawing. This recommenced, briefly, as the caustic virtuosity of Charlie Parker's saxophone scurried

from the speaker, then ceased altogether as the creature carefully lowered itself to a squatting position, its tendrils now moving in gently bobbing patterns that made Dr. Williams think light-headedly of dancing flowers. Gingerly, and wearing a fatuously polite smile, he joined it on the ground, offering thanks for the apparently safe opportunity to do so before his legs gave way of their own accord.

The spool took some twenty minutes to run its course. During that time they were regaled by the thickly textured sonorities of Coleman Hawkins, a brace of roaring pieces from the Woody Herman and Count Basie bands, an Art Tatum solo and several sourly elated numbers by an Eddie Condon group. Apart from a cautiously twitching foot Dr. Williams sat motionless, eyeing his incredible companion and its movements with wary fascination. Occasionally and startlingly the creature would counterpoint the current ensemble or solo with a phrase of its own, intrusions that initially did little to aid the subsidence of Dr. Williams' state of tension, but which he eventually came to await with eager anticipation. These embellishments took a variety of forms, each displaying an astonishing degree of sympathy with the performance.

The final number on the spool commenced, a dryly dragging performance of the blues. With a certain stiff embarrassment, Dr. Williams got to his feet, returned to his former place of refuge, and procured the component parts of his clarinet. He assembled it with hands that now shook only slightly, religiously moistened the reed, then returned to sit in his former position.

He joined in cautiously at first, adding a muttered, almost apologetic embroidery to the trombone solo, inserting his phrases carefully between and around its familiar ruminations. Other instruments joined in for the final collective chorus, and Dr. Williams went with them, piping plaintive comments that were interspersed with the occasional squeak brought about by nervousness and lack of practice and listening with one eagerly attentive ear to the now more frequent and brassily stated interjections supplied by the extraordinary figure before him.

The performance sank to a muted close. There was a brief, solemn silence, and then the creature began to make music of its own, single-voiced and softly at first, but swelling gradually to a richly textured fortissimo; jagged, dissonant sounds that caused the hairs at the nape of Dr. Williams' neck to lift ecstatically and his foot to match its insistent pulse.

It was some minutes before he fully realized what was happening. The music contained passages that he found vaguely familiar, but recognition, when it came, still startled him. A chromatic passage that was nothing more nor less than pure Tatum or Hawkins would be

followed immediately by the creature's own variations, spine-tingling patterns that meshed perfectly with the rambling yet oddly coherent structure of the music.

Dr. Williams became dimly aware that at some point in the proceedings he had joined in again, contributing strangely angular phrases that he would never normally have been capable of conceiving, let alone attempting to perform. He ducked and bobbed and weaved with the music, instinctively following the tantalizing zigzag of modulations, somehow seeking out the right note, the apt harmonic aside.

At long last, it faded and died. Dr. Williams twiddled a startlingly intervalled and totally fitting coda, then sat in deep reverie, inexpressibly content. The skies might fall, he could be stricken with some dread and unheard of disease that was beyond his curing, he might even suddenly find himself viewed in a rather more edible light by the odd and now silent and motionless figure that sat not eight feet away from him, but nothing could destroy the happiness that he felt at that moment. In the past he had added his not altogether unaccomplished embellishments to countless recorded performances, but absence of willing fellow participants had always ensured that these were solitary intrusions onto already familiar ground. Now, for the very first time, the crutch of foreknowledge had been removed, leaving him dependent entirely on his own imagination, his own abilities.

And it hadn't been half bad, Dr. Williams thought. He felt a muffled surge of vanity, then let it come jauntily through in all its unabashed swagger. No, by God, it hadn't been *half* bad.

He glanced briefly at the creature, placed his clarinet back in his mouth, tapped his foot briskly four times, then blew.

Some little time after that, the strains of an exuberant and quite unique performance of *Tea for Two* played by an extraordinary collection of instruments that included bassoon-like croakings and something that sounded vaguely like a plunger-muted sousaphone racketed raspingly through the slowly darkening forest.

Despite his occasional recourse to prayer in times of stress, Dr. Williams was not a religious man and correspondingly had little faith in miracles, but he couldn't help feeling that his finding himself in his present surroundings constituted something closely akin to such a happening. But whatever the cause, he existed in a place of earth and rock and water, bountifully equipped with fruit and vegetables that cautious experiment soon proved tastily edible, abundant shelter, a total absence of any other life-form larger than a rabbit, and its immediate region otherwise populated solely by himself and the brightly hued being that had become his constant companion and

sharer of endless musical excursions that soon left him with a lip like iron and an instrumental technique that he had never dreamed could possibly be his.

There were minor inconveniences, it was true. Insects were frequently present in both variety and abundance, but while they were an undoubted nuisance, he was, oddly, never bitten. Also, it rained—not often, but torrentially when it did happen. Dr. Williams found these things moderately unpleasant, but readily acknowledged that they were a remarkably small price to pay when viewing the picture in toto.

During the early days of his relationship with the creature, understandably excited by what seemed to him to be the perfectly reasonable possibility of establishing verbal contact, he attempted simple conversational training, but it soon became apparent that his efforts in this direction were to be in vain. It obligingly aped his carefully enunciated phrases—always, disconcertingly, mimicking his own light baritone—but there it ended. It was plain that this activity was simply regarded as some inexplicable diversion on his own part which it was willing to humor, and Dr. Williams was forced to the reluctant conclusion that its own mode of communication took some entirely different course to that of his own species. Possibly it was telepathic, an achievement that still remained little more than a dream in the minds of men. But his disappointment was short-lived. Musically, they daily reached a degree of rapport that spoke effortlessly of universal feelings and reactions, an emotional link that invoked his own immediate responses and from which he derived enormous comfort.

If there was a happier man anywhere in the universe, Dr. Williams would have laughed with uproarious disbelief on being informed of his existence. He still found it beyond him to fully accept that his present circumstances were anything other than a dream, but since he was a thinking man and therefore one who had frequently pondered on the true nature of reality, he was not unduly perturbed. Perhaps this was reality and the man-made clutter of plastic, steel and concrete that he had suddenly and astonishingly come to loathe was the dream, a nightmare peopled with uncaring, uncomprehending individuals with whom he had never really communicated and whose idly uniform acceptance of the multi-sensory exercises that now constituted their staple entertainment he scorned with the fervor of the true purist. Occasionally he thought about his wife, and shuddered. Was it possible that such a person really existed, that such a bizarre liaison had been formed! At such times he would hastily assemble his clarinet, and then immerse himself in a positive fury of invention that successfully, if only temporarily, dispelled such

horrifying shadows.

The pattern of his new existence was soon formed. During the days they would wander through the placid confines of the forest, Dr. Williams engaged in desultory exploration, his companion plainly content to let itself be led by its new-found friend. Occasionally, they came across evidence of a civilization, oddly deserted machinery that lay rusting and overgrown in the green shadows, always without any hint of its nature or clue to its ownership. At such times the creature would lurk at a distance, its customary exuberance stilled, only returning when they moved on and the corroded enigma was well behind them. Once they came to a village, a bleakly regimented block of unpractically pyramidal buildings that squatted silent and deserted among the encroaching fronds. Dr. Williams entered one, and found its walls and floor liberally decorated with huge and rusting shackles. They departed, hastily, his companion tooting its obvious relief and his own ethnological suspicions further confirmed by what he had seen.

The creature's amiable lack of intelligence, coupled with its particular musical capabilities, was the key. Clearly, it was a member, possibly the sole survivor, of a subject race— slaves and entertainers, the playthings of a technically advanced but cruel species who had, for reasons that would almost certainly remain unexplained (plague?), deserted them, fleeing the forests to seek the shelter and assistance to be found in their cities. Dr. Williams hoped with grim fervency that these were either several thousand miles away or preferably on another planet altogether.

Each evening, as they rested in the darkening shadows, he would produce the machine, solemnly select a spool, and for a while the brassy effervescence or sadly declamatory strains of jazz, performances that spanned the ninety brief years of its existence as an entity, would stir the stillness of the sleeping forest. Then, when the final blast or sigh had died and the rhythmic pulse was stilled, the recital would begin again, and he would listen, head bowed, to the patterns of simulated brass and reed that hummed and chortled in the darkness, marveling at the now hair-fine accuracy of the copy, yet always conscious of the minutely subtle differences that labeled it as such.

For Dr. Williams understood his chosen music well, and his knowledge that in its moments of greatness it became a highly personal means of statement he found both heartening and sad. It meant, simply, that when the last of the batteries had been used, access to the music in its true form would be gone forever. Yet might this not be, he reflected, in some ways for the best? He was living a new life in a new world, and nostalgia could all too easily imprison

him in a cocoon of memories, only partially aware of the truths of his miraculously compatible existence.

Weeks later, a spool faltered for the last time. Sadly but firmly, as though unable to bear the death agonies of a dear friend, Dr. Williams pressed the switch, cutting Chu Berry off in uncharacteristically faltering mid-solo. He packed machine and spools neatly in their case, and when morning came scooped a hole at the base of a tree and buried them. The creature stood some little distance away, respectfully silent, its posture one of sadness and commiseration. Dr. Williams marked the tree with the five lines of the stave, carefully carved the notations of the flatted third and fifth in the key of b flat, then turned and walked away without a backward glance.

The effects of his loss soon passed. It still echoed in their own musical forays, sudden glaring reminders of lifelong idols and favorite performances that he learned to accept with equanimity and use as harmonic springboards to creations of their own. Each passing day found him increasingly aware of the understanding that integrated their musical conception, something that had existed from the beginning but was now of an interweaving complexity beyond anything that he had ever remotely envisaged. The barrier between them, composed of space and environment, was shredding, and they were moving inexorably toward a blending of musical thought and tradition that he sensed would be the greater both for its fusion and the inevitable discarding of parts of both.

This hitherto untrod plateau was reached one sultry afternoon some weeks later. Dr. Williams lay beneath a tree at the edge of a large clearing, drowsily contemplating the profuse and picturesque greenery in the near distance, while his companion wandered close by, droning a pleasant but seemingly aimless pattern of sound that played softly and at first soothingly.

A sudden and unexpected modulation occurred, a tonal and harmonic obliquity that caused Dr. Williams to stiffen abruptly and twist his head towards the now still figure that faced him from the centre of the clearing. The creature sang on, sounds that built gradually to a complex of timbres that he had never heard before yet which flicked tantalizingly against his mind, stimulating areas of reaction that were contradictorily both new and hauntingly familiar. Something boiled sharply inside his consciousness and as suddenly subsided, an abruptly cleansing explosion that left him shaking with unfulfilled awareness.

He sat up, removed the sections of his clarinet from his haversack, and assembled them with a trancelike deliberateness. Still seated beneath the tree, he began to play, probing low-register adornments that added harmonic sinew to the bubbling search, shepherding the

other's inventions firmly toward the ultimate cohesion that he knew had come at last, and suddenly, like an exultant shout, the pattern was resolved into a sustained sonic tapestry that rang about the clearing, dissolving their surroundings and the very ground beneath them; timeless, placeless sound that seemed to radiate out to the farthest reaches of infinity. Eyes closed, Dr. Williams let his now unbidden fingers seek out the ingredients that were his contribution to this miracle, never faltering in their search, surely predestined in the unhesitating lightness of their choice. He soared and plummetted in a vast sea of sound of which he was an integral part, filled with a sense of completeness that he had never known or dreamed could possibly be. Time was without meaning, space a boundless vista that echoed the triumph of their empathy. Weeping and unresisting, Dr. Williams let himself be reborn.

Soft and distant at first, so faint that he at first accepted it as a not yet integrated part of this happening, an oddly discordant note infiltrated his awareness, a gradually swelling intrusion that bored implacably into this emotional narcosis. Vaguely, he wondered if he had suddenly become acceptable to the native insect population, perhaps about to pay a symbolic toll that marked his physical as well as spiritual acceptance into his new world. He flapped a temporarily unoccupied hand by his ear. The buzzing persisted, loudly now, a pointless, jarring obbligato to the music which flooded about him, its creator seemingly lost in an ecstasy of sound and movement that grew in intensity as it progressed.

His inability to ever fully accept the reality of his surroundings had been a natural precaution on Dr. Williams' part, an instinctively erected barrier against the possible presence of insanity that he had only lowered completely minutes before. Now, suddenly, as the dark pool of shadow swept across the clearing and the huge and writhing figure that faced him, it was as though it had snapped back into place of its own volition, insulating him, so that he watched what followed in a detached way, warily waiting for its completion before committing himself to accept it as fact

The shadow passed on, yet somehow it had remained, a whispily fringed darkness that now dulled the customarily bright body of his friend. Dr. Williams watched stiffly as its movements accelerated explosively from a graceful weaving pattern to grotesque and terrifying frenzy. Simultaneously, the music dissolved into screaming clamor.

The creature's collapse was slow. To Dr. Williams' disbelieving eyes it seemed to shrink upon itself, movement that was blurred by the thickening haze of smoke around it and which now touched his nostrils, acrid and sickening. He watched its tendrils aimlessly collide

and intertwine, still blaring their dissonant agony but weaker by the second, a dying fall of sound that slid jerkingly down in deathly accompaniment to the movements of its maker.

Its final fall was punctuated by various unpleasant sounds. It lay before him, a charred and convulsively deflating thing that bubbled offensively at irregular intervals. Otherwise, it was quite silent.

From the comer of his eye, Dr. Williams saw other movement. He turned his head to watch the small scout ship that had just landed and disgorged two men who now made their way hurriedly towards him. As they passed the still smoking mound they produced weapons and fired them in its direction.

How pointless, he thought. Anyone can see that it's dead.

They reached him and assisted him to his feet, sudden movement that made him feel violently ill. He stared at them, serious faces above blue uniforms.

"We had a hell of a job finding you," one face said. "The automatic signal got through all right, so we didn't have any trouble with the coordinates, but this place is all trees. You must be best part of a hundred miles from the ship. Why didn't you stay close to it?" There was a pause. After a moment, the other face said, "It's lucky for you you were out in the open when we did find you. We couldn't have happened along at a better time if we'd rehearsed it. What was that thing, anyway?"

Dr. Williams found that he was still unexpectedly holding his clarinet. He shook his head, focused squintingly, grasped it with both hands, and swung it like a club at the nearest face. There was a startled ejaculation, a blur of movement, and he was thrown face down onto the ground. Someone straddled him, and he felt moist coldness dabbing on his aim.

"Poor guy," a panting voice said. "He must have really taken off. If anybody saved me from a thing like that, the last thing I'd do would be to try and brain them." There was a prick that he hardly felt, and the voice faded, abruptly.

And then Dr. Williams slept and dreamed dreams that were full of huge shadows and burning men in blue uniforms who screamed and sang mad songs while they danced and died. He watched their fuming gyrations critically, applauding as they disintegrated into ashes at his feet. Occasionally it seemed to him that they loomed close, smiling down at him and talking to him in soothing voices, and then he in turn would scream at them until they were momentarily snuffed out, reappearing through the diffusing pall of smoke, once more singing their tortured and incoherent songs and performing their burning dance against the darkness beyond.

When the ship reached Earth he was immediately rushed to a

place where doctors and machines were waiting to seal off the nightmares forever behind impregnable doors, and after a time they succeeded. Under treatment, his experiences shrank and grew misty in his mind until they finally winked feebly out, pushed firmly and efficiently beyond the boundaries of recall. He still knew—because he was told—that he had been involved in an accident of some kind, but the doctors prudently fabricated a suitable story as to its supposed nature and whereabouts. Knowledge of the truth was the key to memory and possible disaster, and the treatment was an expensive business that the insurance people were reluctant to pay for more than once per claimant. Consequently, he was encouraged to believe that he had been the victim of a piece of careless driving on the part of an unapprehended jetster, and was indignantly content to accept this as the cause of the blank spot that persisted in his mind. He was also reunited with his wife, whose tearful solicitude was quite genuine and which lasted for all of three weeks before being replaced by the verbal prodding that he somehow found rather less bearable now.

Following a period of convalescence, Dr. Williams resumed his professional activities, lecturing to bored or faintly amused audiences on campuses and in sparsely filled halls, only rarely encountering a flicker of genuine interest or understanding. He had grown accustomed to this a long time before, but now, at times, he somehow shared their apathy. The music still stirred him with its brassy melancholy, but there were occasions when it seemed that its vitals had been suddenly and inexplicably removed, leaving behind a thin and empty shell of sound that rang hollowly on his ear. When this happened, Dr. Williams would feel something that was inescapably buried inside him stir faintly, a dim and fading cadence that sounded far beyond his remembering but which briefly moved him to wonderment and an intangible longing.

And at night he would stare up at the sky, never knowing why, seeking something that he could not name among the distant and glittering stars, the dying echo of a song that had once (and only once) been sung, and which would never now be sung again.

* * * *

Tilley, on Tilley:

I'm a fellow of the British Display Society, and until recently spent eight years in charge of display and exhibitions for the South Western Electricity Board (packed it in at Christmas, in order to practice privately as a graphic designer!. As you've already gathered, I'm a longtime jazzer—played clarinet around my home town (Bridgewater, in Somerset) *for quite*

a while, and led my own band for about eighteen months. I took up tenor sax about six years ago, something I wish I'd done sooner, and still do my ham-fisted impersonation of Lester young occasionally.

I started writing about eleven years ago, and my first published story won a Best First Story award in the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine. *I've had fifteen (I think) stories published altogether—about three-quarters of my total output—most of them in British magazines and three in* F&SF. *I'm probably the slowest and least prolific writer working in any field, the chief reason being that I find it such darned hard graft. I love it, but it beats the stuffing out of me, which is why, questions of quality apart, I could never attempt it as a full-time career. . . .*

"I'll be quite happy to keep on trying to develop my craftsmanship, because *I hate sloppy, colourless writing. Far too much writing, in all fields, lacks light and shade and any sort of appreciation of the rhythm and flow of words. I think it's possible that my work in design has helped to keep me conscious of the value of balance and* emphasis, which *means that my approach to both fields is probably much closer than I've ever deliberately made it. (An Interesting thought, and one that's only occurred to me as I write this letter.1*

Even more interesting, I thought as I read it, is the probable interaction with his *other* field: some circuit-rider of tomorrow's far-flung lecture halls is going to have a rich topic in the relationship between jazz and s-f as parallel art forms of the mid-twentieth. (Not too many people span both areas creatively, but the overlap in fans is considerable and jazzmen tend to dig s-f, just as the writers tend to be jazz listeners.)

Bob Tilley's letter was a delight to receive, not only for the self-evident reason, but on two further counts. I knew I had seen his name before, probably in New *Worlds,* certainly not often. It was gratifying to learn that he was not one of the startlingly proficient newcomers who keep popping up—and as suddenly vanishing—but a working craftsman from whom we may expect more in future. Besides which, it is not often that one writer's letter provides me with a built-in introduction to the next story. I left out one sentence up there . . .

I've no desire whatever to be an Innovator, and confess myself in awe of Jim Ballard, one of the most talented and dedicated men I ever met. He's great, isn't he?

* * * *

THE VOLCANO DANCES
J. G. BALLARD

They lived in a house on the mountain Tlaxihuatl half a mile below the summit. The house was built on a lava flow like the hide of an elephant. In the afternoon and evening the man, Charles Vandervell, sat by the window in the lounge, watching the fire displays that came from the crater. The noise rolled down the mountain-side like a series of avalanches. At intervals a falling cinder hissed as it extinguished itself in the water tank on the roof. The woman slept most of the time in the bedroom overlooking the valley or, when she wished to be close to Vandervell, on the settee in the lounge.

In the afternoon she woke briefly when the devilsticks man performed his dance by the road a quarter of a mile from the house. This mendicant had come to the mountain for the benefit of the people in the village below the summit, but his dance had failed to subdue the volcano and prevent the villagers from leaving. As they passed him pushing their carts he would rattle his spears and dance, but they walked on without looking up. When he became discouraged and seemed likely to leave, Vandervell sent the house-boy out to him with an American dollar. From then on the stick-dancer came every day.

"Is he still here?" the woman asked. She walked into the lounge, folding her robe around her waist. "What's he supposed to be doing?"

"He's fighting a duel with the spirit of the volcano," Vandervell said. "He's putting a lot of thought and energy into it, but he hasn't a chance."

"I thought you were on his side," the woman said. "Aren't you paying him a retainer?"

"That's only to formalize the relationship. To show him that I understand what's going on. Strictly speaking, I'm on the volcano's side."

A shower of cinders rose a hundred feet above the crater, illuminating the jumping stick-man.

"Are you sure it's safe here?"

Vandervell waved her away. "Of course. Go back to bed and rest. This thin air is bad for the complexion."

"I feel all right. I heard the ground move."

"It's been moving for weeks." He watched the stick-man conclude his performance with a series of hops, as if leapfrogging over a

partner. “On his diet that’s not bad.”

“You should take him back to Mexico City and put him in one of the cabarets. He’d make more than a dollar.”

“He wouldn’t be interested. He’s a serious artist, this Nijinsky of the mountain side. Can’t you see that?”

The woman half-filled a tumbler from the decanter on the table. “How long are you going to keep him out there?”

“As long as he’ll stay.” He turned to face the woman. “Remember that. When he leaves it will be time to go.”

The stick-man, a collection of tatters when not in motion, disappeared into his lair, one of the holes in the lava beside the road.

“I wonder if he met Springman?” Vandervell said. “On balance it’s possible. Springman would have come up the south face. This is the only road to the village.”

“Ask him. Offer him another dollar.”

“Pointless—he’d say he had seen him just to keep me happy.”

“What makes you so sure Springman is here?”

“He *was* here,” Vandervell corrected. “He won’t be here any longer. I was with Springman in Acapulco when he looked at the map. He came here.”

The woman carried her tumbler into the bedroom.

“We’ll have dinner at nine,” Vandervell called to her. “I’ll let you know if he dances again.”

Left alone, Vandervell watched the fire displays. The glow shone through the windows of the houses in the village so that they seemed to glow like charcoal. At night the collection of hovels was deserted, but a few of the men returned during the day.

* * * *

In the morning two men came from the garage in Ecuatan to reclaim the car which Vandervell had hired. He offered to pay a month’s rent in advance, but they rejected this and pointed at the clinkers that had fallen on to the car from the sky. None of them was hot enough to burn the paintwork. Vandervell gave them each fifty dollars and promised to cover the car with a tarpaulin. Satisfied, the men drove away.

After breakfast Vandervell walked out across the lava seams to the road. The stick-dancer stood by his hole above the bank, resting his hands on the two spears. The cone of the volcano, partly hidden by the dust, trembled behind his back. He watched Vandervell when he shouted across the road. Vandervell took a dollar bill from his wallet and placed it under a stone. The stick-man began to hum and rock on

the balls of his feet.

As Vandervell walked back along the road two of the villagers approached.

"Guide," he said to them. "Ten dollars. One hour." He pointed to the lip of the crater but the men ignored him and continued along the road.

The surface of the house had once been white, but was now covered with gray dust. Two hours later, when the manager of the estate below the house rode up on a gray horse, Vandervell asked: "Is your horse white or black?"

"That's a good question, senor."

"I want to hire a guide," Vandervell said. "To take me into the volcano."

"There's nothing there, senor."

"I want to look around the crater. I need someone who knows the pathways."

"It's full of smoke, Senor Vandervell. Hot sulphur. Burns the eyes. You wouldn't like it."

"Do you remember seeing someone called Springman?" Vandervell said. "About three months ago."

"You asked me that before. I remember two Americans with a scientific truck. Then a Dutchman with white hair."

"That could be him."

"Or maybe black, eh? As you say."

A rattle of sticks sounded from the road. After warming up, the stick-dancer had begun his performance in earnest.

"You'd better get out of here, Senor Vandervell," the manager said. "The mountain could split one day."

Vandervell pointed to the stick-dancer. "He'll hold it off for a while."

The manager rode away. "My respects to Mrs. Vandervell."

"Miss Winston."

Vandervell went into the lounge and stood by the window. During the day the activity of the volcano increased. The column of smoke rose half a mile into the sky, threaded by gleams of flame.

The rumbling woke the woman. In the kitchen she spoke to the house-boy.

"He wants to leave," she said to Vandervell afterwards.

"Offer him more money," he said without turning.

"He says everyone has left now. It's too dangerous to stay. The men in the village are leaving for good this afternoon."

Vandervell watched the stick-dancer twirling his devil sticks like a drum major. "Let him go if he wants to. I think the estate manager saw Springman."

"That's good. Then he was here."

"The manager sent his respects to you."

"I'm charmed."

Five minutes later, when the house-boy had gone, she returned to her bedroom. During the afternoon she came out to collect the film magazines in the bookcase.

Vandervell watched the smoke being pumped from the volcano. Now and then the devil-sticks man climbed out of his hole and danced on a mound of lava by the road. The men came down from the village for the last time. They looked at the stick-dancer as they walked on down the road.

* * * *

At eight o'clock in the morning a police truck drove up to the village, reversed and came down again. Its roof and driving cabin were covered with ash. The policemen did not see the stick-dancer, but they saw Vandervell in the window of the house and stopped outside.

"Get out!" one of the policemen shouted. "You must go now! Take your car! What's the matter?"

Vandervell opened the window. "The car is all right. We're staying for a few days. *Gracias,* Sergeant."

"No! Get out!" The policeman climbed down from the cabin. "The mountain—pfft! Dust, burning!" He took off his cap and waved it. "You go now."

As he remonstrated Vandervell closed the window and took his jacket off the chair. Inside he felt for his wallet.

After he had paid the policemen they saluted and drove away. The woman came out of the bedroom.

"You're lucky your father is rich," she said. "What would you do if he was poor?"

"Springman was poor," Vandervell said. He took his handkerchief from his jacket. The dust was starting to seep into the house. "Money only postpones one's problems."

"How long are you going to stay? Your father told me to keep an eye on you."

"Relax. I won't come to any mischief here."

"Is that a joke? With this volcano over our heads?"

Vandervell pointed to the stick-dancer. "It doesn't worry him. This mountain has been active for fifty years."

"Then why do we have to come here now?"

"I'm looking for Springman. I think he came here three months

ago."

"Where is he? Up in the village?"

"I doubt it. He's probably five thousand miles under our feet, sucked down by the back-pressure. A century from now he'll come up through Vesuvius."

"I hope not."

"Have you thought of that, though? It's a wonderful idea."

"No. Is that what you're planning for me?"

Cinders hissed in the roof tank, spitting faintly like boiling rain.

"Think of them—Pompeiian matrons, Aztec virgins, bits of old Prometheus himself, they're raining down on the just and the unjust."

"What about your friend Springman?"

"Now that you remind me . . ." Vandervell raised a finger to the ceiling. "Let's listen. What's the matter?"

"Is that why you came here? To think of Springman being burned to ashes?"

"Don't be a fool." Vandervell turned to the window.

"What are you worrying about, anyway?"

"Nothing," Vandervell said. "For once in a long time I'm not worrying about anything at all." He rubbed the pane with his sleeve. "Where's the old devil-boy? Don't tell me he's gone." He peered through the falling dust. "There he is."

The figure stood on the ridge above the road, illuminated by the flares from the crater. A pall of ash hung in the air around him.

"What's he waiting for?" the woman asked. "Another dollar?"

"A lot more than a dollar," Vandervell said. "He's waiting for me."

"Don't burn your fingers," she said, closing the door.

* * * *

That afternoon, when she came into the lounge after waking, she found that Vandervell had left. She went to the window and looked up towards the crater. The falls of ash and cinders obscured the village, and hundreds of embers glowed on the lava flows. Through the dust she could see the explosions inside the crater lighting up the rim.

Vandervell's jacket lay over a chair. She waited for three hours for him to return. By this time the noise from the crater was continuous. The lava flows dragged and heaved like chains, shaking the walls of the house.

At five o'clock Vandervell had not come back. A second crater had opened in the summit of the volcano, into which part of the village had fallen. When she was sure that the devil-sticks man had

gone, the woman took the money from Vandervell's jacket and drove down the mountain.

Ten years ago, when the first of these *Annuals* was being prepared, I delighted in writing about the authors: There were only five (out of eighteen) whom I did not know personally, or at least by fluent correspondence. And they were, generally, fascinating people.

Within a few years, half the entries were by writers with whom my only contact was in the formality of securing permission—sometimes that was done through an agent or previous publisher. With many, I did not have even the previous acquaintance of reader-and-writer. (Some had written in other fields, but often as not I did not get around to the back-reading till after the anthology was finished.) There was more to discuss in what was happening to science fiction as a whole: the change in range of interests, the broadening area of publication, the refinement of techniques.

Over the last two years, certain patterns began to appear in what I did know about the backgrounds and special interests of the new names. (Comparatively few were "new young writers" in the usual sense; a good many were journalists, teachers, and writers already established in other fields.) It occurred to me that the motivations and objectives of writers newly attracted to the field might offer some insights into the overall direction and form of (what used to be "science fiction" and is now) whatever it is to which we apply the loose label S-F.

This year I made a point of asking for as much information—personal and professional—as I could get.

Certain things are immediately evident. Many of the new people are British. (The reasons for that—beyond the two already obvious—will appear later.) Once again, although there are a large number of "Firsts" (first published fiction), there are comparatively few really "new *young* writers," and few even of these are primarily genre writers. Most of them have concurrent ambitions or established activities, not only in other areas of literature, but in the other arts and sciences—particularly the life sciences.

These are the generalities. The specifics, as far as was practicable, I have included here as they came to me, in the authors' own words, or those of their colleagues and/or critics.

* * * *

SLOW TUESDAY NIGHT
R. A. LAFFERTY

A panhandler intercepted the young couple as they strolled down the night street.

"Preserve us this night," he said as he touched his hat to them, "and could you good people advance me a thousand dollars to be about the recouping of my fortunes?"

"I gave you a thousand last Friday," said the young man.

"Indeed you did," the panhandler replied, "and I paid you back tenfold by messenger before midnight."

"That's right, George, he did," said the young woman. "Give it to him, dear. I believe he's a good sort."

So the young man gave the panhandler a thousand dollars; and the panhandler touched his hat to them in thanks and went on to the recouping of his fortunes.

As he went into Money Market, the panhandler passed Ildefonsa Impala, the most beautiful woman in the city.

"Will you marry me this night, Ildy?" he asked cheerfully.

"Oh, I don't believe so, Basil," she said. "I marry you pretty often, but tonight I don't seem to have any plans at all. You may make me a gift on your first or second, however. I always like that."

But when they had parted, she asked herself: "But whom will I marry tonight?"

The panhandler was Basil Bagelbaker, who would be the richest man in the world within an hour and a half. He would make and lose four fortunes within eight hours; and these not the little fortunes that ordinary men acquire, but titanic things.

. . . . .

When the Abebaios block had been removed from human minds, people began to make decisions faster, and often better. It had been the mental stutter. When it was understood what it was, and that it had no useful function, it was removed by simple childhood metasurgery.

Transportation and manufacturing had then become practically instantaneous. Things that had once taken months and years now took only minutes and hours. A person could have one or several pretty intricate careers within an eight-hour period.

Freddy Fixico had just invented a manus module. Freddy was a Nyctalops, and the modules were characteristic of these people. The people had then divided themselves—according to their natures and inclinations—into the Auroreans, the Hemerobians, and the Nyctalops; or the Dawners who had their most active hours from 4 A.M. till Noon, the Day-Flies who obtained from Noon to 8 P.M., and the Night-Seers whose civilization thrived from 8 P.M. to 4 A.M. The cultures, inventions, markets, and activities of these three folk were a little different. As a Nyctalops, Freddy had just begun his working day at 8 P.M. on a slow Tuesday night.

Freddy rented an office and had it furnished. This took one minute, negotiation, selection, and installation being almost instantaneous. Then he invented the manus module; that took another minute. He then had it manufactured and marketed; in three minutes it was in the hands of key buyers.

It caught on. It was an attractive module. The flow of orders began within thirty seconds. By ten minutes after eight every important person had one of the new manus modules, and the trend had been set. The module began to sell in the millions. It was one of the most interesting fads of the night, or at least the early part of the night.

Manus modules had no practical function, no more than had Sameki verses. They were attractive, of a psychologically satisfying size and shape, and could be held in the hands, set on a table, or installed in a module niche of any wall.

Naturally Freddy became very rich. Ildefonsa Impala the most beautiful woman in the city was always interested in newly rich men. She came to see Freddy about eight-thirty. People made up their minds fast, and Ildefonsa had hers made up when she came. Freddy made his own up quickly and divorced Judy Fixico in Small Claims Court. Freddy and Ildefonsa went honeymooning to Paraiso Dorado, a resort.

. . . . .

It was wonderful. All of Ildy's marriages were. There was the wonderful floodlighted scenery. The recirculated water of the famous falls was tinted gold; the immediate rocks had been done by Rambles; and the hills had been contoured by Spall. The beach was a perfect copy of that at Merevale, and the popular drink that first part of the night was blue absinthe.

But scenery—whether seen for the first time or revisited after an interval—is striking for the sudden intense view of it. It is not meant

to be lingered over. Food, selected and prepared instantly, is eaten with swift enjoyment: and blue absinthe lasts no longer than its own novelty. Loving, for Ildefonsa and her paramours, was quick and consuming; and repetition would have been pointless to her. Besides Ildefonsa and Freddy had taken only the one-hour luxury honeymoon.

Freddy wished to continue the relationship, but Ildefonsa glanced at a trend indicator. The manus module would hold its popularity for only the first third of the night. Already it had been discarded by people who mattered. And Freddy Fixico was not one of the regular successes. He enjoyed a full career only about one night a week.

They were back in the city and divorced in Small Claims Court by nine thirty-five. The stock of manus modules was remaindered, and the last of it would be disposed to bargain hunters among the Dawners, who will buy anything.

"Whom shall I marry next?" Ildefonsa asked herself. "It looks like a slow night."

"Bagelbaker is buying," ran the word through Money Market, but Bagelbaker was selling again before the word had made its rounds. Basil Bagelbaker enjoyed making money, and it was a pleasure to watch him work as he dominated the floor of the Market and assembled runners and a competent staff out of the corner of his mouth. Helpers stripped the panhandler rags off him and wrapped him in a tycoon toga. He sent one runner to pay back twentyfold the young couple who had advanced him a thousand dollars. He sent another with a more substantial gift to Ildefonsa Impala, for Basil cherished their relationship. Basil acquired title to the Trend Indication Complex and had certain falsifications set into it. He caused to collapse certain industrial empires that had grown up within the last two hours, and made a good thing of recombining their wreckage. He had been the richest man in the world for some minutes now. He became so money-heavy that he could not maneuver with the agility he had shown an hour before. He became a great fat buck, and the pack of expert wolves circled him to bring him down.

Very soon he would lose that first fortune of the evening. The secret of Basil Bagelbaker is that he enjoyed losing money spectacularly after he was full of it to the bursting point.

. . . . .

A thoughtful man named Maxwell Mouser had just produced a work of actinic philosophy. It took him seven minutes to write it. To write works of philosophy one used the flexible outlines and the idea indexes; one set the activator for such a wordage in each subsection;

an adept would use the paradox feed-in, and the striking analogy blender; one calibrated the particular-slant and the personality-signature. It had to come out a good work, for excellence had become the automatic minimum for such productions.

"I will scatter a few nuts on the frosting," said Maxwell, and he pushed the lever for that. This sifted handfuls of words like chthonic and heuristic and prozymeides through the thing so that nobody could doubt it was a work of philosophy.

Maxwell Mouser sent the work out to publishers, and received it back each time in about three minutes. An analysis of it and reason for rejection was always given—mostly that the thing had been done before and better. Maxwell received it back ten times in thirty minutes, and was discouraged. Then there was a break.

Ladion's work had become a hit within the last ten minutes, and it was now recognized that Mouser's monograph was both an answer and a supplement to it. It was accepted and published in less than a minute after this break. The reviews of the first five minutes were cautious ones; then real enthusiasm was shown. This was truly one of the greatest works of philosophy to appear during the early and medium hours of the night. There were those who said it might be one of the enduring works and even have a hold-over appeal to the Dawners the next morning.

Naturally Maxwell became very rich, and naturally Ildefonsa came to see him about midnight. Being a revolutionary philosopher, Maxwell thought that they might make some free arrangement, but Ildefonsa insisted it must be marriage. So Maxwell divorced Judy Mouser in Small Claims Court and went off with Ildefonsa.

This Judy herself, though not so beautiful as Ildefonsa, was the fastest taker in the City. She only wanted the men of the moment for a moment, and she was always there before even Ildefonsa. Ildefonsa believed that she took the men away from Judy; Judy said that Ildy had her leavings and nothing else.

"I had him first," Judy would always mock as she raced through Small Claims Court.

"Oh that damned Urchin!" Ildefonsa would moan. "She wears my very hair before I do."

. . . . .

Maxwell Mouser and Ildefonsa Impala went honeymooning to Musicbox Mountain, a resort. It was wonderful. The peaks were done with green snow by Dunbar and Fittle. (Back at Money Market, Basil Bagelbaker was putting together his third and greatest fortune of the

night, which might surpass in magnitude even his fourth fortune of the Thursday before.) The chalets were Switzier than the real Swiss and had live goats in every room. (And Stanley Skuldugger was emerging as the top actor-imago of the middle hours of the night.) The popular drink for that middle part of the night was Glotzenglubber, Eve Cheese and Rhine wine over pink ice. (And back in the city, the leading Nyctalops were taking their midnight break at the Toppers' Club.)

Of course it was wonderful, as were all of Ildefonsa's— But she had never been really up on philosophy, so she had scheduled only the special thirty-five minute honeymoon. She looked at the trend indicator to be sure. She found that her current husband had been obsoleted, and his opus was now referred to sneeringly as Mouser's Mouse. They went back to the city and were divorced in Small Claims Court.

The membership of the Toppers' Club varied. Success was the requisite of membership. Basil Bagelbaker might be accepted as a member, elevated to the presidency and expelled from it as a dirty pauper from three to six times a night. But only important persons could belong to it, or those enjoying brief moments of importance.

"I believe I will sleep during the Dawner period in the morning," Overcall said. "I may go up to this new place Koimopolis for an hour of it. They're said to be good. Where will you sleep, Basil?"

"Flop-house."

"I believe I will sleep an hour by the Midian Method," said Burnbanner. "They have a fine new clinic. And perhaps I'll sleep an hour by the Prasenka Process, and an hour by the Dormidio."

"Crackle has been sleeping an hour every period by the natural method," said Overcall.

"I did that for a half hour not long since," said Burnbanner. "I believe an hour is too long to give it. Have you tried the natural method, Basil?"

"Always. Natural method and a bottle of red-eye."

. . . . .

Stanley Skuldugger had become the most meteoric actor-imago for a week. Naturally he became very rich, and Ildefonsa Impala went to see him about 3 A.M.

"I had him first!" rang the mocking voice of Judy Skuldugger as she skipped through her divorce in Small Claims Court. And Ildefonsa and Stanley-boy went off honeymooning. It is always fun to finish up a period with an actor-imago who is the hottest property in the

business. There is something so adolescent and boorish about them.

Besides, there was the publicity, and Ildefonsa liked that. The rumor-mills ground. Would it last ten minutes? Thirty? An hour? Would it be one of those rare Nyctalops marriages that lasted through the rest of the night and into the daylight off-hours? Would it even last into the next night as some had been known to do?

Actually it lasted nearly forty minutes, which was almost to the end of the period.

It had been a slow Tuesday night. A few hundred new products had run their course on the markets. There had been a score of dramatic hits, three-minute and five-minute capsule dramas, and several of the six-minute long-play affairs. *Night Street Nine*—a solidly sordid offering—seemed to be in as the drama of the night unless there should be a late hit.

Hundred-storied buildings had been erected, occupied, obsoleted, and demolished again to make room for more contemporary structures. Only the mediocre would use a building that had been left over from the Day-Flies or the Dawners, or even the Nyctalops of the night before. The city was rebuilt pretty completely at least three times during an eight-hour period.

The Period drew near its end. Basil Bagelbaker, the richest man in the world, the reigning president of the Toppers' Club, was enjoying himself with his cronies. His fourth fortune of the night was a paper pyramid that had risen to incredible heights; but Basil laughed to himself as he savored the manipulation it was founded on.

. . . . .

Three ushers of the Toppers' Club came in with firm step.

"Get out of here, you dirty bum!" they told Basil savagely. They tore the tycoon's toga off him and then tossed him his seedy panhandler's rags with a three-man sneer.

"All gone?" Basil asked. "I gave it another five minutes."

"All gone," said a messenger from Money Market. "Nine billion gone in five minutes, and it really pulled some others down with it."

"Pitch the busted bum out!" howled Overcall and Burnbanner and the other cronies. "Wait, Basil," said Overcall. "Turn in the President's Crosier before we kick you downstairs. After all, you'll have it several times again tomorrow night."

The Period was over. The Nyctalops drifted off to sleep clinics or leisure-hour hideouts to pass their ebb time. The Auroreans, the Dawners, took over the vital stuff.

Now you would see some action! Those Dawners really made fast

decisions. You wouldn't catch them wasting a full minute setting up a business.

A sleepy panhandler met Ildefonsa Impala on the way.

"Preserve us this morning, Ildy," he said, "and will you marry me the coming night?"

"Likely I will, Basil," she told him. "Did you marry Judy during the night past?"

"I'm not sure. Could you let me have two dollars, Ildy?"

"Out of the question. I believe a Judy Bagelbaker was named one of the ten best-dressed women during the frou-frou fashion period about two o'clock. Why do you need two dollars?"

"A dollar for a bed and a dollar for red-eye. After all, I sent you two million out of my second."

"I keep my two sorts of accounts separate. Here's a dollar, Basil. Now be off! I can't be seen talking to a dirty panhandler."

"Thank you, Ildy. I'll get the red-eye and sleep in an alley. Preserve us this morning."

Bagelbaker shuffled off whistling "Slow Tuesday Night."

And already the Dawners had set Wednesday morning to jumping.

* * * *

Insofar as anything about R. A. Lafferty is typical of anything (including Lafferty), "Slow Tuesday Night" is typical of his work: offbeat, deceptively light-humored, deeply involved, mocking-but-loving symbolism-that-is-not-quite-satire.

By this year's standards, Lafferty is not a new writer: He has been publishing for five or six years now and has appeared in this collection before ("Seven Day Terror" in the *8th Annual).* But I did tend to think of him as one of the "bright young writers"—a group that would include, for instance, Thomas Disch, Roger Zelazny, Robert Rohrer, Norman Kagan—all well under thirty. And I think I rather visualized one of the literary-magazine/s-f straddlers—someone way-in with the way-outs everywhere.

Three years ago, he offered no information about himself. This time, under persuasion, he quoted what he had sent to one of the magazines:

If I had an interesting biography, I wouldn't be writing s-f and fantasy for surrogate interest. I am, *not necessarily in that order, fifty years old, a bachelor, an electrical engineer, a fat man.*

And continues: *I'm* a *year older now, but nothing else needs changing. I was born in Iowa, and moved to Perry, Oklahoma, when I was*

four years old. . . . I've lived most of my life in Tulsa, with a year in Oklahoma City, a year in DC, four and a half years in the army in W.W. 2 —Texas, North *Carolina, Florida, California, Australia, New Guinea, Morotai, Philippines.*

. . . Education is only high school, a few University of Tulsa night courses, I.C.S. engineering courses, linguaphone, etc. . . . Have worked most of my years for electrical jobbers, mostly as buyer and contractor price-quotation man. ... I am an amateur linguist, astronomer and biologist; an independent by political registration, a Catholic of the conservative or out-of-season variety. . . .

Alex Kirs is also a bachelor, and was first published about six years ago—but there the resemblance ends. He is, he says, in his early thirties: *. . . sociable, hospitable, and lazy . . . reasonably muscular, bald, wear glasses . . . live in New York, hare traveled extensively throughout the states. I am a shoestring sportsman: hunting, fishing, skindiving, archery, etc.,* a *stylish horseman, a competition sailor, an indefatigable hobbyist, and a motorcycle enthusiast* [Stretchy shoestring—j.m.]. *. . . / live in a clutter of sports equipment with my cat, Madame Nhu. . . .*

Apparently, he also does, or did, go to the movies.

* * * *

BETTER THAN EVER
ALEX KIRS

Joe and Monica went to the Movie. Like everyone else, they were gone for a month. Clinton met them at Noordberg's Thursday party—the one you went to get out of going to the one on Saturday—and treated them to an *et tu* stare.

"Welcome back to the real world," he said.

"Clint, don't be like that," Monica said. Clinton saw that she had been aged by the experience. To his certain knowledge—compounded of a five years' acquaintanceship, a thousand bits of awed gossip, and some eerily inappropriate newspaper headlines—her tawny eyes had looked out over the ruins of one of the most creepily disastrous love affairs imaginable, with the same expression of mild discomfort with which she might announce a headache. You looked at the eyes now and thought: This girl has suffered. He felt like telling her unpleasantly, *You have too much makeup on; go wash your face.*

"Clint's still deepening his rut," Joe said. Clinton smiled.

"And soon I will disappear from sight in it, hmmn?" Joe's face was even worse; all the old, familiar tics had been ironed out. If a souvenir balloon, subsiding into wrinkles week by week on the mantel, had had a bit of fresh air valved into it, it would have inspired much the same feeling; it looked nice, yes, but how long would it last? Clinton stared coldly at their faces; that the change had been predictable made it no easier to stomach. The women came out haggard and viciously serene; the men, looking calm and dedicated and noble.

"Clint, why don't you give in?" Monica said. "You're getting bitter, and there's nothing so useless as a bitter nonconformist."

"So now I'm a nonconformist?" he asked her, pleasantly. "And bitter as well. Why is it I seem to remember a time— excuse me, it was so terribly long ago—when we all agreed it was a matter of individual choice?" He thought, *If she says, "We have come to our senses, now," I will bite my fist.* And then he thought, *Maybe I really mean it.* But even Monica occasionally knew which arguments could be counted on to kick her in the shins.

"Oh, you're impossible," she said. And then, to Joe, "And it would have meant so much to him, too." Joe tousled her hair, looking noble. Clinton felt himself in the position of a kitten playing with a ball of wool; it was interesting, and lots of fun, and so he continued playing. . . . Perhaps, if he played long enough, he would find himself

disentangled, able to let go.

"Would it, now?" he said. "You tempt me; why not tell me all about it?"

"It was the greatest experience of my life," she said.

"You should be ashamed to say things like that about your life," he said, suddenly tired. In the background, amid couches that looked like coffee-tables and coffee-tables that looked like couches—it made no difference at all on which you sat—Noordberg was cozying up to Janet. Noordberg was short and plump, with little, stupid eyes; he could not smile, or light a cigarette, or say hello without looking sinister. He had the manners of an octopus, and a heart of gold. Janet had the sort of politeness that dealt with sex fiends as if they were somebody's grandfather; grandfathers, so treated, could not believe their luck and coyly turned their faces away for a moment, growing tusks.

There was no reason to stay any longer; Clinton pointed with his chin, and Joe and Monica turned to look. "What is that theme they play," Clinton murmured, "when the cavalry comes over the hill? Excuse me; good night." He drifted away into the throng; a sociologist, tracing with a dull spoon the course of his progress, would have discovered a beautiful graph; Non-involvement at the Perimeters of Small Groups. Coming up behind Janet, he put his nose possessively in her hair. She turned her good, delicate, un-pretty face to his; was it possible there was relief in her eyes? He thought, *Oh, she really loves me.*

"Time to go, pet," he said fondly. "We have a date, remember?" Yes, she loved him; between showing consideration for him, or for Noordberg, there was no need for decision at all. Rising, she smiled.

"Such a nice party, Mr. Noordberg," she said. "Good night."

"Good night, Noodle. See you," Clinton said. Noordberg told them good night and how much he had enjoyed having them; possibly his heart was broken, but he just looked sinister. Joe and Monica—and several others—waved faintly as they went out the door.

Later, in the dark, his arms in their habit around her as she listened through his skin to his slowing heart, he blew a strand of her hair from his lips and said: "Joe and Monica are back. Did you talk to them?"

"Yes. You?" she said. He nodded.

"Same old story," he said. "You know, I'm getting very tired of being Above All That, but it's still true; I just don't see lopping a month off my life—I have a life, you know— watching some goddamn movie. If only they didn't come out looking so noble, smelling at every pore of having been through a transmogrifying experience." He removed an arm from her, groped, found cigarettes and lit up. He

breathed a cloud of smoke out into the dark, carefully aiming it away from her hair.

"You know what Monica said to me?" he asked. "She said, 'It was the greatest experience of my life.' My God, if I had had a life like Monica's, I would be sitting on a mountain wearing a yellow robe, shuddering whenever a man came within fifty miles."

"Clinty, Monica's not very bright. You should be kinder to her." And then, reflectively, "Not exactly a movie; they all tell us that. Somehow I get the impression it isn't anything like a movie at all."

"Movie, shmoovie," he said. "Besides, think of the result. Can you imagine me going around being Calm, Dignified and Noble? I'm not the type. And you know, it would be more of a consolation if it weren't so damn obvious that an awful lot of people *are* the type."

She stirred then, half sitting up. She said: "Clinty, you know how Noordberg does? The way he looks at you as if he were a mad scientist and you were the retort in which he was going to mix something dirty?" Clinton chuckled in spite of himself; whither politeness now?

"Good old Noodle," he said.

"Well, he was one of the first to go, and ever since he came back, he doesn't." In the darkness her face could tell him nothing, nor his, her; he frowned.

"Are you kidding? I've seen him a dozen times since he came back, and believe me, he's the same as ever. If anything, he's worse." But mentally he began to tote and tally, wishing for a better memory.

She continued: "No, Clinty, it's not the same at all. He tries to, but it's just going through the motions. As if he thought you expected him to, and didn't want to hurt your feelings, or make you anxious about him."

"Kiddo, go to sleep; you're already dreaming. Still, it's a nice idea. Everybody doesn't have to end up noble?"

She made an affirmative noise, reclining, choosing her own side of the bed. He settled back to wait for the extinguishing breath of sleep, and for tomorrow, which would be a better time to wonder whether it was reassurance he had harvested, after all.

"They must be government approved," she said suddenly. "Mustn't they?"

"Mustn't who? Oh." Clinton blinked; it was an odd thought. "I guess so," he said. "Otherwise somebody would have raised a stink. Unless you're thinking about the money, how much it costs? Financing, friendly banks; sure it's government approved."

"Umn," she said; he felt her falling away, diminishing, receding into the void of sleep. At the last possible instant before total unconsciousness, she murmured:

"Joe and Monica don't need to hold hands all the time, now."

He had thought himself worried before; now he worried. She was cool and calm and resolutely considerate always; he had taken her to his bosom perhaps in some measure because, when he trumpeted at the world his *I've got problems of my own,* her unverbalized answer had been, *Enough for both of us?* In a world where everybody depicted love in comic-strip colors, they found richer expression in halftones; they did not make scenes. Gone back over, the conversation was the closest she could ever come to telling him she was deeply troubled.

It was some little while before Clinton fell asleep.

* * * *

Clinton worked as an account executive in an advertising agency. He had a radical and extremely personal view of his situation; he thought it was like being a Boy Scout in a large room filled to the ceiling with cotton candy. You could breathe, it was delicious, and there was plenty of it— but you could not see your hand in front of your face, much less find two sticks to rub together. He told this to everyone; they thought, *How original, how bitter,* and laughed, sometimes a little vaguely. By the law of averages, he ought to have met somebody who would have said, *What have you got against contentment?* so that he could have replied, *Contentment with what?* But he never had.

He lived seven blocks from his office, and always walked home, smiling devilishly as he outpaced the taxicabs of his trapped superiors enroute to Sutton Place. The evening after the party, on impulse, he walked a couple of blocks out of his way to the converted brownstone in which Bernie lived. Bernie was an artist, and would have been an exceedingly expensive one, if he had not been rich. It did not matter that he was *really* an artist, and painted the large, disturbingly whorled emptiness he would have painted if he had been starving in a loft; in their repertoire of smiles, gallery owners have a special one reserved for the very rich, and it was the only one Bernie ever saw.

Clinton walked up, on deep plush; the door opened to his knock. Bernie, half-dressed and carrying a dirty rag in one hand, greeted him with a broad smile.

"Clint! Come on in. What have you been doing, anyway—I haven't seen you since—"

"Since the Movie," Clinton said easily, entering. As always, he stopped in front of the painting that faced the entrance. It was a large thing, covered with countless overlapping concentricities that seemed to diminish infinitely amid bitter smoke. Bernie had a title for it, but

like most artists, Bernie was a literary imbecile; Clinton called it *Kinsey in Hell,* and found it tenaciously disquieting. As usual, it held his attention for some seconds; when he turned, it was to find Bernie seated on the floor, working on something in his lap. Clinton smiled; it was exactly his idea of how an artist should polish something—tailor-fashion on the floor, lovingly absorbed. Then he made out what it was Bernie was polishing. He strolled over and sat on the floor, facing Bernie.

"Going hunting?" he asked, and wondered why his voice sounded so odd.

Bernie held the rifle out to be admired. He did not hold it clumsily—artists, whatever their faults, do not hold things clumsily—but between the way its essential function dictated it be held, and the way he held it, there was an enormous and unbridgeable gap. Yet, somehow, Clinton did not find this sufficiently reassuring.

"Isn't it beautiful?" Bernie asked. "All my life, I never realized the . . . *depth* to these things. Do you know they're almost a perfect symbol for power? Pure power? Think of it, curled up dormant in there, sleeping in its little nest in a cave of steel, ready to burst out instantly at the slightest call. Think of it! The perfect symbol for power; hard and cold but turgid with latent flame and noise."

"Bernie . . ." Clinton began.

"They get dirty, though. The minute you hang them up, they attract dust like a magnet." Clinton exhaled—why was it, with relief?—and tried again.

"Bernie, you've been listening to the wrong salesman."

"Huh? What? You mean you don't approve? Clint, you're the last person on earth I would have thought . . ." His face was so crestfallen that Clinton had to laugh.

"No, no—it's just that you were quoting the wrong sales pitch. The one you gave is the one for pistols, you know, like on TV." He made shooting motions with thumb and forefinger. "That's a rifle. You're supposed to look at it in a combination of the ways you would look at a Patek Philippe watch and a . . . and a jet plane."

"Oh," said Bernie. He appeared to think for a moment. "You know, it's impossible to buy a pistol in this city. I tried and tried, and it was like trying to get permission to buy ten pounds of heroin. It's not just the red tape; it's the attitudes of the people you have to go to. Pure Kafka." *He means Orwell,* thought Clinton. *He just doesn't know the difference.*

"What's to tell? Why don't you just go and find out for yourself? Monica was telling me about you just this morning, Clint. Monica is very upset about you."

"Monica should have her mouth washed out with soap. Come on,

tell me what happens in there after you go in and they take your ticket and you sit down."

"Oh, you mean, the technical part? That's funny ... because afterward you just don't remember very much of that. It's not just a . . . you don't just sit there, I mean. And it goes on for a month, so there are intermissions, only you do exercises instead of just walking around. And you eat a little bit, just to keep the internal muscles in trim, because they feed you intravenously while you're out. But nobody really pays much attention to the . . . technical part."

"So tell me the story, then," Clinton said. "Come on, Bernie, gimme the plot."

"But, Clint, that's impossible. It's too big . . . there's too much, it would take a year. And some of it I'm not even smart enough to explain. I haven't got the . . . I'm not a wordsmith, Clint. Could you imagine somebody painting a Rembrandt from a wooden mannikin, for chrissake?"

"Very easily," said Clinton softly. Bernie opened his mouth and then closed it again and looked doubtfully down at the floor. "Bernie, there are people who can paint Rembrandts from mannikins," Clinton said.

"And I can't, you mean? Well, all that has changed, let me tell you!" Bernie stopped, looking at Clinton, who beat down the sudden, betraying intensity.

"By all means, tell me," Clinton said.

"It was the greatest experience of my life," said Bernie, in a holy voice. "It shook my very foundations and rearranged them. It made me realize, absolutely, what I had been doing wrong." He looked at Clinton, not defiantly, but as a man looks who has told the truth, and is awed by it.

"Bernie, what are you painting now?" Clinton asked, and sighed for saying it; he had had to.

"It's over there by the window," said Bernie. Clinton got up and strolled toward the easel. He did not have to force himself to stroll; he knew in advance almost exactly what he would see.

It was on the easel, and unfinished—and yet it was finished beyond necessity or sense. On the very large canvas, two big young people, boy and girl, held hands and gazed out over the viewer's head. They were handsome and muscular and clean; he bare to the waist, she in blouse and shorts. Behind them, vibrant with early-morning light, stretched a pastoral landscape; high in the sky was the meticulous glint of an airplane; Clinton would have described their expressions as being that of cows who have just lifted their muzzles from a pond—cows who have been told to express Calm Courage, High Ideals. Every square inch of the canvas was painted as

realistically as a photograph, and yet, it was obviously unfinished; it would be finished when it resembled one of those German photographs, in which everything is incredibly sharp and dramatically three-dimensional, realler than real.

"What's it called?" Clinton said.

"It's called *New Horizons.* Do you like it?" Clinton's mind swallowed the title, swished it around a little, and spat it up slightly changed. *Earth Mother, Here We Go!* he thought, giving it a last steady stare. He strolled, whistling softly as he might in some bright hospital, to the door.

"Goodby, Bernie," Clinton said.

Closing the door, he glanced back. On the wall, Kinsey listened as each devil told how it had done absolutely everything with every other devil, had always done so and would always continue to do so, world without end, so that all the case histories were exactly the same, and all the lines of all the columns of all the tables held the same number.

* * * *

His apartment was dark; he did not bother calling out. He walked to the kitchen and found the note, one corner held down by a large unopened can of tomato juice, in the middle of the table. He read:

"I'm a conformist and a moral weakling and a coward. Everyone else has gone, and there seems to be provision for those of us who weren't cut out to be noble. I'm not strong enough, Clint; I can't fight everyone and myself and you, too. This way I'll just have to fight you. Or maybe I'm brave; we'll still be in love a month from now."

There was no salutation, and it was unsigned. A jar next to the can held a bouquet of brushes and pencils; he selected a grease pencil from it and wrote, on top of her note, *I love you,* in thick black letters. Then he drew a heart around it.

He opened a cabinet, took down a bottle of scotch and sloshed some in a glass. He lifted the glass to his lips, where the rim made an unexpected, musical trill against his teeth. He regarded his hand with considerable surprise. "Well, well," he said aloud, in tones of sprightly interest.

He emptied the glass in one long swallow, sloshed rather a lot more into it, and put the bottle away. Whistling softly, he strolled through the dark apartment to the bedroom. Bedrooms in which only men have slept smell of socks; bedrooms in which men and women have slept smell only of women. At least, to men. He lay down on his side of the bed, occasionally sipping at his drink, for quite a long time.

He stared at the ceiling, and let his mind wander, as men under such circumstances are prone to do, back over the good times, the very good times. He closed his eyes . . .

Janet came back, still in love with him, still loved; he told her, "You look older," which was a lie, because she looked younger, like a nineteen-year-old product of Dachau instead of a twenty-four-year-old product of Smith.

They were at somebody's place—when were they not at somebody's place?—and it was necessary that he stay by the TV set, to check up on a commercial. He sat near it, waiting for the station break, paying no attention to the party in the background. In midscene, the television set made a hideous, quite unconscionable noise; the screen broadcast scanning-patterns. Behind him there was a faint stir, a tension. The screen made a visual burp, and was occupied by a small man; not literally a small man, but a man you knew had a small soul. He had nasty glittering eyes and a pinched weak mouth, and every inch of him reeked of a perverted intimacy with, and knowledge of, power. The small man said, in a prim, defiant voice, all stand. *To the sound of scraping chairs behind him Clinton turned, to see Janet standing, all of them standing, blank-eyed and loose-mouthed, standing waiting for the next order.*

* * * *

Clinton opened his eyes; he had not been asleep. It had been a waking dream, differing from a daydream in that it needed no will's push to help its progress. It was familiar; he had had it many times.

Clinton sat up on the bed; if he were a clairvoyant, where, oh where, would he find an honest medium? *Boy, what a director you'd make,* he thought. Picking up his drink, he stood and then walked to the bedroom's french windows, opened them, and went out on the small terrace. He tilted his head and rocked back; above him to all sides were sheer cliffs, terraced escarpments, of thousands upon thousands of lighted windows. High above, the stars invisible because of the diffusion of light from the windows, was the sky. Clinton thought of Noordberg, innocently lecherous and then pretending innocent lechery; in his mind he looked again at Bernie's picture, the two big children in front of their pastorale, and wondered what it was that lurked beneath, that must needs insist so loudly that it was not there.

He could not go to the Movie; *he* was the devil he knew. He took a small, civilized sip of his drink and, stretching out his arm, delicately let the glass fall into the abyss beneath him. *Always the one for the dramatic gesture,* he thought, carefully not saying it aloud lest it

turn into a sob, and, looking up again, shook his futile fist viciously, not knowing if he did so at the windows, or at the sky.

* * * *

. . . brainwashing is so old-hat as almost to have passed into folklore, Alex Kirs wrote, commenting on his story *. . . yet scientists jubilantly announce successful use of physio-psychological* conditioning *as a curative tool. People nowadays seem, whatever the real, tragic depth of incident and event in their lives, to be frighteningly prone to dismiss it all as meaningless and unfulfilling unless they can align with some party or movement...*

* * * *

Parties and movements, or the need for them, are hardly unique to our limes. But perhaps there is a clue here to the curious counterpoint of conformity and rebellion, constrictions and relaxations, that are specific to the (upbeat tempo) movements of mores and moralities in the sixties.

Do you remember what "civil rights" and "civil liberties" used to mean? We have accepted, one by one, the practices of peacetime military conscription, secret diplomacy, guilt by association, political imprisonment, and political debarment from employment (all unthinkably un-American in the days before the Un-American Affairs Committee). But we are no longer willing to tolerate any denial of what rights of citizenship we do retain, on the primitive and ludicrous grounds of color prejudice.

"Freedom of speech" used to be illustrated by Voltaire's epigram: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." But most "intelligent liberals" accepted without question the necessity for some degree of censorship about sex, and the "seamy side of life." ("Sex education" was a crusade as much as fifty years ago—but it was to be conducted in sanitary "scientific" language, in a pure—nay, chapel-like—atmosphere.)

Now, Madalyn Murray is mobbed by her neighbors, and public meeting places will not accept rental money from known Communists. But students picket for the right to use obscenity, and the common euphemisms concerning personal functions are fast joining the outstretched pinkie in the gallery of outworn respectabilities. "Dirty words" have become the subject of a sort of holy crusade, while "atheist" is once again a dirty word.

Even the once sacrosanct freedom of the press has given way

before the demands of “security” and “classified” information. It hardly shocks us to hear of a magazine issue impounded for security reasons. But Henry Miller and de Sade are on sale at the corner drugstore. Authors have won the right to use ordinary household language in print. We can read and view contemporary works of literature, drama, and art with as much freedom (at least) as that previously reserved for properly aged classics.

Is it possible that antibiotics and the Pill have given us new “faith” in young people’s “sane” attitudes about sex—while the bomb and chemical warfare have awakened grave doubts about the ability of the same youths to think “realistically” about politics, religion, ethics, and philosophy? Is it in the laboratories, rather than the schools, homes, and churches, that our moralities are manufactured?

Kirs spoke of “physio-psychological conditioning” ...

COMING-OF-AGE DAY
A. K. JORGENSSON

I was ten and I still had not seen them! You didn't expect to see a woman's unless you were lucky, which a very few boys at my school professed to be. But nearly everyone my age knew what a man's looked like.

But you got some funny answers.

"You're too young," said a squit about half my size, and another very big boy nodded agreement.

"We don't want to do any harm," the big one said, wisely as it turned out. His voice was already breaking, and I think he was on the change.

"We're not going to tell you." There were a number of small knots in the playground that took a secretive line, and whispered with their backs to everybody. I belonged to a loose group of boys who, looking back, I would say were intelligent and sensitive and from better homes. Their interests were academic, or real hobbies. But I was a little contemptuous of their ignorance and softness. And I ended up hanging about behind a group led by a capable boy, or breaking roughly into a fighting gang, having a punch-up and then going to skip with the girls. I tried everything. I was nobody's buddy. But a few groups could expect to rely on me if they needed an extra hand to defend themselves against a rough bunch or to try a good game. "Go and get Rich Andrews," someone would say: "he'll play."

They got me one day after school for a very secret meeting on the waste plot between the churchyard and the playing fields. Guards were out at the edge of the bushes. We had to enter over the churchyard wall. And we had to crouch to approach the spot, crawling along the bottoms of craters left between bulldozed heaps and tips of earth.

It was a good hide-out behind a solid screen of leaves, deep in the bushes. Churchill was there; so was Edwards and my friend Pete Loss. They had started something, and

I saw it was a bit dubious, because Churchill and Gimble were in a little arbour away from the others, and though I could not see much, they had their trousers down.

"What's up?" I asked Pete.

"Oh, they're playing sexy-lovers," said Pete.

"Why? What's the idea?"

"D'you know all about it?" he asked. "I don't s'pose you do. Oh, I

did it once. It's not much. Old Churchill thinks he's got a better way. It gives him a thrill."

"I don't like it," I said. I was curious and afraid, but hoped I sounded like you should when someone's trying to get one up on you and you're not having any.

"Come on," I urged Pete. "Let's go."

"They want to show you," he said.

"Oh, I know all about that," I lied. 'I'm not going to play pansy for that dirty beast Churchill."

It took more urging, but when I made a move Pete came too. The guards tried to stop us, as though they had designs on me. I shouted, "Stop it! I shall shout! Aw, come on; play the game," and they let me go. But they persuaded Pete to stay.

I got away and of course kept quiet. And lost another chance to know all about sex. It was the time for sex education, of course, and this gave me a fair technical knowhow, but I didn't have the practical experience. I hesitated to muck about and the teachers didn't exactly encourage it: also, my parents were a bit strict. So I left it.

It was after that party in the bushes that controversy arose. Someone said to Churchill:

"You nit. You don't just play about with it. And you don't just get hairy all round. You get something put there at the right age. It's the operation!"

"I don't care about the operation," he said. "You can do this—" and he described masturbation openly enough to make me feel hot. Miss Darlington was getting close and I was afraid she'd overhear. She had an A-l pot on her front.

They silenced as she approached, but I heard Elkes say under his breath to Churchill, "Look at their pots! That's where they keep their sex organs. You get outside ones put on your inside ones. Darlie's got a big male thing on hers, it sticks out a mile."

Quite frankly, this horrified me. I had always wondered whether all the hairiness of men came up from the private place and how large the organs grew. But separate adult bathing had come a few years before my first swim, and if they did wear these things on the beach, you couldn't tell them from pot bellies. It sounded like a book I had read which said how pot bellies grew on adolescents now whereas it used to be only old men and middle-aged women. I wondered what lay behind that expression "pot belly." It made me feel funny even to think of it. But it also made me feel sad, just as a fuller sexual awareness did later. You never know which gives more satisfaction—the relief of the sexual act, or the retention of that inner virile feeling when you have refrained for a good while. And there is a sort of dimension that is all power and mind and strength, that the physical

conditions don't seem to improve or improve upon.

In the old days, I am told, there used to be more explicit sexual bits in the films. But on television these days, as in the theater, they are very cagey. I heard one master from the upper school, who is reputed to be a wild unrestrained type, call this a second Victorian Age. According to him, every time we get a queen reigning to a ripe old age, it's nearing the end of the century: and people are afraid the millennium will come at the end of 1999. So what with one thing and another, they are fearfully prudish.

Which is ridiculous, because when the naked torso was the fashion they could not have hidden the pot-bellied things they wear these days.

I asked my father one day what happened when people got pot-bellied.

"You know all about that from school, surely, son."

"Well, no, it's the one thing they've never taught us."

"Why did you want to know? It's not always good to know these things."

"Well, I didn't—I mean, well, the boys at school talk about it in the playground. I'm getting pretty big now, dad, nearly eleven. I ought to know what they mean by now."

"I see. I shall have to talk to your head teacher, Rich, I can see that. Anyway, pot bellies are just when people get fat around the lower part of the abdomen. People eat too much these days."

"Oh . . . Only they said at school it wasn't that. Gluttony is frowned on now, and drinking too much. But people still have—"

"That is enough, Rich. In a year or two you will be grown up enough to be able to understand. In the meantime you have had at least two years of education in biology, and you know all about the primitive sex processes."

I knew when to be quiet. Parents were not so strict in the middle of the twentieth century, so the history books say, and it was a bad thing. I wonder if that is why people are ashamed and hide their sexual excesses now. Do as I say and not as I do, etcetera—unwilling hypocrisy, but they can't help it. But that mention of "primitive" sex, it foxed me, because Edwards asked at school what "primitive" meant, and was told that it referred to an early form before it developed. Well, there are two sorts of development, natural maturation and scientific application, and I do not believe the scientific part has been explained to us yet.

Before I peeped and saw, I had just about worked it out. It was a diffident sort of guess, but I reckon it proves what Socrates said. People may not believe me, but I was on the right lines. It was more than those funny ideas I had as a small boy—that people grew their

tails long, or that they carried a little hairy monkey about inside their trousers. I tied it up with the artificial creation of living tissue over twenty years ago. These days they are always coming up with new forms of living tissue: they can give you a new body for an old one in bits or *in toto* nowadays. And they have perfected their methods so much that the so-called artificial one is better than the natural one. After all, they have eliminated all those subtle differences between the chemical product and the equivalent natural one, which was one major advance in many.

Now if you see people lose a leg, as I did once (rather, it had to be removed later) and a few months later they've grown a new one, why not improve on the natural, or primitive, sexual organs? I am beginning to agree with an aunt of mine who, in an episode I won't relate, told me there was no pleasure in sex; the sensation of pleasure was in the mind, not the organ or nerve. Well, what if you did get a better organ? If you're not much of a chap anyway, it would do you no good unless it had a psychological improvement on your confidence.

I have more evidence of this point. The only other clue I had before I was thirteen and registered as an adolescent was hearing a conversation between two old men: all they did was complain that the new pot bellies had not solved people's sexual problems after all.

Except the time when I peeped. It was on the beach one day when the sun was very hot and a lot of people sat perspiring in their many light clothes. All of a sudden a woman began to scream and clutch at the lower part of her body, as if to pull something off. After a while women started gathering round and trying to help. But she was desperate and tore her costume, an enveloping thing, until this sort of huge fleshy roll could be seen clinging to her. It could have been a flabby woman's breast, or a fantastic roll of fat, but this would be a bit too unlikely, I reckon. The woman pulled at it, and it gave and stretched out like a tentacle and —"Get away! You nasty little boy. How dare you peep! Go away." After a screech like that I crawled away.

* * * *

Going to the sexiatrist was the call-up day for coming-of-age even more than one's initiation into the forces came through the medical examination. It was with mixed feelings that I faced the ceremony, having had an enjoyable childhood with no great attraction urging me into manhood. I reported at the Center, and a nurse took my particulars. I signed an agreement that I was prepared to undertake

the responsibilities of adulthood; all rather vague, as it was a matter of contracting out to avoid the consequences rather than contracting in. Had I refused, I should have had twenty forms to sign and dozens of conditions written in in fine print. Either that, I had heard, or I ended up in a harsh institution for the backward.

First a doctor checked my family doctor's assessment of my sexual age. He examined me with that frankness and propriety that scientific control over sexual phenomena demanded, took blood samples and a tiny piece of my skin, looked into my eyes and checked my height, coloring and so on. Most of the time I was modestly allowed to keep my pants on, even though I was stripped of all else, including my watch.

After going through the mass radiography room, the cancer-heat-test room and other places, and receiving various boosters against the various plagues, I was sent home, walking out with a curious sense of illness-at-ease, ordinariness and anticlimax.

It took me by surprise to get another Ministry postcard two weeks later, requesting my presence once more at the Sexual Health Center. This time it was in the afternoon, and the nurse ushered me into the doctor's other surgery with a little more respect. There was a tiny holding of the breath and it made me more expectant.

"Good afternoon, Andrews. Nice to see you again. Still feeling in good health?"

"Yes, sir, thank you." One never admits that one has never felt quite the same since being pumped with inoculatives.

"Ready to have a consex fitted! Now, Andrews, this is a most private matter which I think will explain itself. We are not afraid to be scientific about sex as a subject, but I trust you will keep this to yourself. If you are not completely satisfied—*for any reason whatsoever*—tell no one but come and see me. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"I am a sexiatrist, actually, not a doctor. Now come and look in this glass container."

I looked. As I believe it usually does to others, it struck me with a sort of horror to see this thing alive, a collapsed sort of dumpling with ordinary human skin, sitting in its case like a part of a corpse that had been cut off.

"Get used to it," he said. "It's only ordinary flesh. It has a tiny pulse with a primitive sort of heart, and blood and muscle. And fat. It's just flesh. Alive, of course, but perfectly harmless."

He lifted the lid and touched it. It gave, then formed round his finger. He moulded it like dough or plasticine and it gave way, though it tended to roll back to a certain shapelessness.

"Touch it."

"I couldn't."

"Go on."

He was firm and I obeyed. It had a touch like skin and was warm. It might have been part of someone's fat stomach. I pushed my finger in, and the thing squeezed the finger gently with muscular contractions.

"It's yours," he announced.

I nearly fainted with horror. It strikes everyone that way until they realize how simple, harmless and useful free living tissue can be, and its many healing purposes. It embarrassed me to guess where the "consex" was to be located on my body, and my intuition was uncertain with equally embarrassing ignorance. But one only has to wear a consex a short while to realize how utterly natural it is, and how delightfully pleasant when in active use. It is a boon to lone explorers, astronauts, occupants of remote weather and defense stations, and so on.

"Don't worry," said the specialist as I drew back in disgust. "It's no more horrible than the way you came into the world, or the parts each of your parents played in starting the process. In fact, it's cleaner, more foolproof, and efficient, and far more satisfying than a woman. Thank heaven, without them we'd be overrun."

I feared to do anything. He said,

"I'll show you how it works. Don't take it off for at least a week, not for any reason. See me at once if there is any discomfort. Later on, you may remove it for athletics, though you can do most things with it on—swimming, for instance. In the toilet it rolls up easily enough. But don't disturb the suction or play around. It clings well if you leave it alone, and it's very comfortable."

He took me into a private cubicle, where I undressed and lay under a soft blanket. Then he brought the thing in on his hand and pulled the blanket back.

I held my breath. It was the worst moment of my life for fear, though not for pain.

"I've stimulated it a bit," he said. "It'll take over for you this time, but every time after that it's up to you to make the first move, or nothing will happen. It's very responsive. Now you must lie here half an hour until I let you go."

He let it rest between my thighs, and it covered all those parts you never see on pictures of nudes except those in classical religious paintings. It was comfortable. It felt pleasant. This first time when the sexiatrist goes out and leaves one alone with one's body and one's consex and one's private thoughts is the crucial one.

It was only pleasant sensation; I had not been given any warning. So I tolerated it. But at the same time I was disgusted at the smallness

of sophisticated adult behavior. Hell, I thought, they take a lot for granted. But my curiosity overcame my dignity, and I did not rebel.

It was hardly over when I heard a conversation which startled me.

"Do you have a letter from your parents?" the sexiatrist was asking someone.

"No."

"But you still refuse to have an appliance fitted?"

"Yes."

"Well, I agree it is not compulsory. But you'll have to give a very good reason for refusing. And without a letter from a doctor or parent or guardian we may not accept your reasons."

"I'm a conscientious objector."

"On what grounds? Do you realize what you're letting yourself in for by refusing to wear a consex?"

"I don't believe all the claims made for it," he said, but feebly.

"You don't even know them," said the sexiatrist, condescendingly. "I'm quite sure of that. But surely you want to know what it's all about first? Surely the subject fascinates you so that you are interested enough to desire the experience for a while?"

"No, sir. In principle."

"In principle! What do *you* know about it? Tell me. What *do* you know about so vast a subject?"

"I don't believe in the principles the welfare authorities base it on."

"You don't believe in them! You don't believe them despite the fact that the government authorizes me to fit every boy and girl with an appropriate consex as soon as he or she reaches puberty. Every boy and girl in this population of over eighty million wears one—"

"Not *every* boy and girl."

"All but one or two in a million, and those are mostly for health or mixed-sex reasons. They are approved by the R. M. A. and every major health, legal and educational authority in the country. Virtually all religious denominations have welcomed them. But you refuse."

"Welcomed, sir? I don't believe any of them."

"I see. You don't believe that this country is heavily overpopulated? You don't believe that before consexes came out the years of adolescence were years of miserable misfits trying to adjust to a half-baked situation? And that boys slept promiscuously in spurious natural sexual relations, that girls had illegitimate babies sometimes from the earliest years it is possible to conceive, and that mere children contracted serious venereal diseases from these methods.

"You think you can do without all this. And what sort of substitute will you have? Tearing about on a rocket-scooter or getting

drunk! Raping a woman or just stealing her handbag! And if and when you grow up . . .

"Did you know that there are ten million bachelors and the same number of spinsters in this country who have never been married nor had a so-called love affair but are sexually wholly satisfied and consummated? Did you?"

"It may have been in the papers, sir."

"Tell me." He spoke kindly and coaxingly for a moment. "Is it because you've picked up some little bad habit? It's very common, nothing to be ashamed of. This thing will help you."

"No, sir."

"Come on now, man of principles. Square with me. Haven't you? Are you sure you've never committed . . . well, self-abuse?"

"What, sir? I—I haven't done anything wrong."

"Come off it, lad. No one has ever never done anything wrong."

"But I haven't, sir."

"Do your parents approve of your attitude?"

"I think so, sir."

"You think so? That's not good enough. Now come on. Be a good chap and let us fit you a consex. It's much nicer than natural sex or any of that. You don't want to be the odd man out, do you?"

"No, sir—"

"Good. All right, then. Nurse, he's accepted after all. Get it out, will you."

"No, I haven't, sir. No!"

"I am an authority on this, lad. You mean to say you still haven't accepted that the government knows what is best for the nation after all I've told you?"

"I haven't, sir, no. It's not the government—"

"You haven't? But I thought just now you said you had."

"I didn't want to be the odd man out; but I can't wear one of these."

"Then you will be the odd man out, won't you? What d'you mean, you can't? Come into the laboratory and let me show you."

There was silence then for nearly half an hour. Now I know what one of those laboratories looks like, I can imagine the sexiatrist taking him round, telling him to peer into a microscope and see tiny microbes swiveling about in plasma, showing him charts of the amino acids, the blood-types, the cell-types, the skin-types, etcetera, pulling out samples for quick-fire experiments, and showing him a few easily digested examples of living tissues artificially made for various purposes. Then the door opened and in they came.

"Well, what did you think of it?"

"Very interesting, sir."

"Impressive, wasn't it? Wasn't it!"

"Yes, sir."

"Now what do you say? It's up to you. You have some idea how it works now, and you're not afraid any longer, I hope."

"No, sir."

"You'll consider it."

"I am considering it, sir."

"Oh, good. Do you think you'll be able to decide now?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good. I'll call the nurse then, shall I?"

No answer. He rang the desk bell.

"You won't refuse us after all that, now, will you?"

"Well. . . Please, sir . . ."

"I'm going to ring your parents."

The nurse came in, dropped my clothes on the bed, and shut the door. I heard the phone click as I slid out of bed, then click again.

"I'll give you one more chance," said the sexiatrist. "In case you're ashamed or anything. Nurse, tell me, do you wear a consex?"

"Yes, doctor, I do."

"A male consex?"

"Yes."

"And you like it? It's comfortable, not unhealthy? You can do what you like? You don't feel guilty about it?"

"I love it," she said. "I've never had difficulty with it. It always responds to my lead and never disobeys."

"Thank you. Now, boy, are you satisfied?"

"What happened the first time?" the boy asked the nurse with a mixture of sheepishness and daring.

The nurse said nothing. I wondered if she blushed. The boy said: "My father called it an artificial prostitute."

"Nonsense, lad. You don't know what you're talking about. They say worse things about holy matrimony, so-called."

"I have religious objections," said the boy. "I can control myself without all this."

"All what? Without all what?" the doctor asked sharply.

"This . . . appliance."

"It's only living flesh," he said. "Look, here's one. See? I touch it. If God hadn't meant this stuff to exist, it wouldn't exist, would it? Now you touch it. Don't your parents wear one?"

"No, sir, they don't."

"Ah! Well, you're quite free to do as *you* please. Don't be afraid to go against them. As I told you, the authorities have called you up for the purpose of giving you one, and you are protected by the law. We shall support you to the hilt. Your parents don't object to fluoridation,

do they? Or antismog in the air?"

"Yes, sir, they do."

"Hmmm."

I heard a muttered "Nut cases" outside my door, and the nurse opened it for the sexiatrist. He strode through, booming.

"Andrews, ah, Andrews, you're a sensible lad. Now you've just become a man and learned all about it. How d'you like it?"

"All right, sir."

"Feels okay, doesn't it?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "very nice," though sneakingly I sympathized with the boy out there. I knew the voice of all the temporal powers was speaking through the sexiatrist, and all the pressures were being brought to bear, but I admired him for resisting.

The sexiatrist knelt and held me.

"Now, sir," he said, "now, Mr. Andrews, would you mind very much if we showed our friend here how nicely the little consex fits? We have to show you how it feeds, too, because it's going to grow and mature right along with you. That's why it's important this lad Topolski has his fitted now."

I detected the tiny note of disdain at the boy's foreign name, and half inclined to retort at the sexiatrist for the one he had used all along.

"He doesn't have to, does he?"

"Now don't you start," said the doctor, and he drew me forward, levering off my pants at the same time.

"What's wrong with that?" asked the sexiatrist, showing the consex fitting like a fig leaf and looking as innocuous as a fold of skin. "I've even thought," he went on, half to himself, half to the young nurse, "that they're far more aesthetic than the bare uni-sex, and this return to clothing oneself at all times and in all places is quite unnecessary. The time will come when things will turn full circle, and we shan't be afraid to go completely nude again."

I saw the point. I began almost to like my consex, even though the sensation it could give was disturbingly overwhelming. But the boy turned away after a cursory examination. He said nothing.

"Well?" asked the big man, and I realized all of a sudden the mental pressure, the semi-mesmeric force of it that I had allowed to ride me, and that this small dark twelve-year-old was bucking. "You don't want a black mark on your book, do you?"

I wondered, What book? I did not know, then, that the State's records kept its finger on this one more aspect of a man's "suitability."

"I do a lot of sport," he said weakly, almost visibly wilting, and looking for somewhere to hide. He must have felt awful, foolish and mixed-up.

"Ah, so that's what it is! Well now. Dearson, the world champion marathon runner, actually wears his running! And all the other athletes have them. They simply take them off and wrap them in a little blanket—like this one— while they're participating. No trouble at all. Now come on, be a good chap. We'll just take your measurements—most of them are compulsory—and leave it to you to come back later and collect your consex. How about that?"

"All right," he said. I saw him stiffening his resistance again to the paternal air, and felt fairly sure the internalized authority would not be strong enough in him to bring him to accepting the consex. But he would have to submit to the tests as required. The sexiatrist would ring his parents later, then he would have to return and sign the many forms, by one of which he would delegate to the Minister of Health responsibility for his sexual welfare—a condition mentally as unacceptable to him and his parents as the consex was physically unacceptable.

I was dressed and dismissed, yet I lingered at the specialist's door waiting vaguely for something. Then the boy gave his address. It was just round the corner from mine.

The fact that we were neighbors does not seem important, perhaps. But it's going to be. I am going round when I have a chance, to ask Topolski the real reason why he refused to put on the "appliance."

* * * *

ONE WORD ON TV STARTS UPROAR IN COMMONS: "*I would* have *used it in similar conversation with any group of grown-up people."* (Kenneth Tynan on the BBC)

* * * *

WILL THE PILL AFFECT AMERICA'S MORAL STANDARDS? ... *A growing number of mothers are asking gynecologists to prescribe birth-control pills for their daughters—particularly daughters leaving* home *for colleges. "It doesn't happen too often," says Dr. Gardiner of Indianapolis, "but when it happens once a week, it seems as if it's every day."*

* * * *

GINZBURG SPEAKS FOR "SEXUAL HONESTY" . . . *Ginzburg is on*

his way to jail to serve a *five-year prison term on obscenity charges upheld last week by the* Supreme *Court. The Court held in a five-to-four decision that advertisements for* Eros *magazine and two other Ginzburg publications pandered to prurient appetites...*

* * * *

RELIGION TAKES A LOOK AT PLAYBOY "PHILOSOPHY" ... The *Church, says the* Christian Advocate, *must stop ignoring what it calls "playboyism"—because it represents a "new religious alternative" ...*

* * * *

Six years ago, a slim volume called *New Maps of Hell* put science fiction on the literary map. The author, a gifted comic novelist taking a fling at literary criticism, was a staunch supporter of the Virile Virgin, or "Look, Ma, no hands," social-mural school of s-f. The genre, he contended, was suited only to abstract, or wide-screen, ideas. For instance: "The role of sex in science fiction seems bound to remain secondary." And: "What will certainly not do ... is any notion of turning out a science fiction love story."

Nor was Mr. Amis alone in his views; most editors in the field agreed with him at the time.

"Coming-of-Age Day"—particularly since it found print as a first story by an unknown—is evidence enough of what has happened in the few years since. (It is true that the British magazines—like British radio—have abandoned Puritan restraints more eagerly than the American; but for exhibit B, try William Tenn's "The Masculinist Revolt," or Willard Marsh's "The Sin of Edna Schuster," both from *F&SF.)* As for the science-fiction love story, there never was any question about it—not since del Rey's "Helen O'Loy" (1938); nor, for a moment, while Sturgeon was writing; and not with stories like Zelazny's "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" *(9th Annual),* or Leo P. Kelley's "O'Grady's Girl," in *F&SF* last year.

I don't think there is any serious doubt now about the tolerance of the field for the whole range of human interests and human behavior. What is at issue in the new work is not topic, but treatment. Today it is symbolism and surrealism the Old Guard is fighting.

Josephine Saxton here gives us a love story in the new vein— and another "First."

THE WALL
JOSEPHINE SAXTON

It was as if the landscape was divided into two halves, split across by some change in the light, in the atmosphere, in the colors of the air and the earth. It was a great flat valley that rose so shallowly to the summits of the surrounding escarpments that the change in height was scarcely noticeable, but indeed the difference in height between the floor and the horizon was some five hundred feet. A great curving saucer. But the saucer was cracked across from east to west by a difference. The horizon on the north and the horizon on the south when looked at from west or east looked scarcely different from one another when seen in turn, but to bring the eyes forward would have shown how great indeed the difference between these two halves was, and the eyes looking thus would discern a definite line across this area of the world, coming closer, winding upward, until it was close enough to be seen as a wall.

It was a very high wall, thirty feet in height, and it was very ancient in its stone, dark blue, hard, impenetrable, but rough and worn. Crystalline almost, its surfaces sprang this way and that, revealing whole lumps of glittering faceted hardness, with smooth places where mosses and orange lichens had got hold; and at its foot many creeping plants; tough twisted vines bearing clusters of ungathered raisins, convolvulus white and pink, and ivy in many colors, thick, glossy and spidery. Here and there stones had fallen from its old structure, two and three feet thick, and in one place, almost halfway across the floor of the valley, there was a hole through the wall, only six inches across its greatest measurement, and three feet from the floor, which was moist red clay on the north side, and dry white sand on the south side. The top of the wall was sealed to all climbers by rows of dreadful spikes which curved in every direction, cruel, needle-sharp, glassy metal rapiers set into green bronze. They were impenetrable in every way, these swords, and stood endless guard between north and south.

The valley was the home of rats and snakes of many kinds, and thousands of spiders ran in the dust at the foot of the leafy creepers, and rabbits burrowed in the clay on the north side, and lizards scuttled in the sand on the south side. There were two sources of water: one a spring which flooded a puddle in the clay—the water here was cold and green and clear—and the other a limpid pool in the sand under a rock, the water therein being warm and slimy and gray.

There were no trees to be seen anywhere, only the earth with the sparse grasses; no habitation save the rabbit warrens.

At either side of the hole in the wall lived a man and a woman. The man lived on the north side where it was usually cold and damp, and the woman lived on the south side where it was usually warm and dry. These two were tall and thin and beautiful, strong and lean, but something was to be seen in their way of moving that spoke of inner suffering, some twisted thing which showed on the outside, almost imperceptible, something from the heart. He was fair in color, with yellow-gray hair to his shoulders and a beard of great length which tangled in great curls, with blackberry thorns and stains of purple juice in his beard from the raisins he had eaten over the years. His feet and hands were horny with callouses from running and scrabbling for wild rabbits, but his fingernails were specklessly white, for, in his idle hours, of which there were many, he sat and cleaned them with a little stick of thorn wood and rubbed them down to a neat shape on a stone in the wall. He wore a threadbare suit of lovat green thorn-proof worsted suiting, a dark-green silk shirt which was of the finest quality, with gilt cufflinks which had only enough cuff just to stay hanging in the threads, and a tie which could not be seen for the wild beard.

The woman was dark and brown like a nut that has been polished. Her hair was dark, so dark it was not black but something beyond black, and her lashes and brows matched it in depth and thickness, and the hair fell straight and heavy to her thighs in great thick locks with not a wave or curl. Her hands and feet also were immaculately clean, but she had callouses on her knees from kneeling in the sand at the side of her pool of water, washing her hair until it shone. Her breasts were still full and young, bearing the marks of suckling an infant, but that was in another life. She was dressed in a dark blue dress of courtelle jersey with brass buttons long ago turned mouldy green. The dress fitted her figure and had a pleat in the back of the skirt, and she showed a little bit of nylon lace, sometimes when she walked, peeping out from under the dress, a very dusty white. She always carried a handbag with her. It was a large white plastic beach bag with bamboo handles, and in it were all manner of bottles containing sun oil, hand lotion, face cream and skin food—none of which she ever used— handkerchiefs, hairpins, dried-up cigarettes, old bills, papers and letters and a paper bag with a clean sanitary pad and two little safety pins wrapped up tight. There was also in the bag a brush and comb, a necklace of heavy beads, several photographs, some dried flowers and several recipes for the making of home-made wines, Irish soda bread and potted meat.

These two people were lovers. For most of the day, in their separate climates, they would sit by the hole in the wall exchanging

conversation, peeping at glimpses of one another, able to see only half a face, or a hand, or a length of hair through the fissure, making up poetry for one another which only had meaning for themselves alone; and sometimes they would hold hands through the rock, although they were only able to do this for very short periods of time because of the awkward height of the hole, and the extreme pain caused by being half bent and by the cold sharp rock rubbing on their arms. They would exchange bits of food—blackberries and raw rabbit meat, ripe grapes, and mushrooms—and they would pass bunches of grasses or flowers from around the base of the wall to each other with passionate love messages whispered from the heart and from their deepest feelings. Although they had never seen one another, or touched one another farther than their wrists, they felt deeply for one another in the tenderest way, and were swept by full passions that could never be consummated because of the wall. At times like these —especially was it hard when the moon was full—they would sit close to the hole and weep and moan in longing for each other, longing for something the other could give were it not for the cruel wall that parted their starving bodies. Many long tortured hours they passed in this way wishing the wall would melt. But it never melted, it stayed there hard and enduring, as if it had always been there and always would be so. They had no ideas on the subject of how to relieve themselves of this terrible situation, for it had been like this so long they could hardly remember when it was, the day they had found themselves, each at a side of the wall. Their love had begun on that very day, even before the sound of their singing voices, and with the rapturous discovery of the hole and the first blissful touches of the hands, and with the dreadful realization that they could never come closer together than this. All through the years they had yearned but never thought it could ever be any different. They knew, as if with an inborn knowledge, that the wall was too deeply set to be tunneled under, too long to be walked around, if indeed it had an end anywhere, and much too hideously guarded at its crest.

One day the man began to think that he could not stand it any longer. His body and emotion had taken all they could; he was racked with desire and his head was full of pain with inner weeping. He suggested to the woman that they should part. He explained that the idea had come to him that there might be other lands where a person might live, over the horizon, away to the north and south, things they had neither of them dreamed of, other loves perhaps, other climates and better food. He felt then that anything would be better than to sit here forever just yearning for something that could never be had. At first, when the woman listened to this idea, she was shocked so deeply inside herself that she became as stone, she neither spoke nor moved

for a day or a night, but lay with her head on the stone of the wall in a cold agony such as she had never before experienced. And then she began to weep, silently at first, then with little moans, then louder and from lower in her being, until she screamed in great pain, and cut her forehead on the blue rock and the blood ran into her dark hair, although she felt nothing but the pain of the emotions caused by the idea. But the man persisted. He spoke to her soothingly and gently, and he explained with a heavy heart that it would cause him an equal pain to be parted forever from her, but that it seemed the only course open to them unless they were to die here without ever having known any other thing better than craving.

After twenty-eight days the woman had absorbed this idea herself; she had turned it over, and tried to visualize the world beyond, without the man, perhaps with strangers, other women, more food, another dress, but she could feel none of it and gave up as the pictures refused to take shape. But she knew also that her man was right, that it had to be so, that they would part, and turn their backs on each other and walk off, she over the hot sand, he over the sticky red clay. She knew it would be like this, she had accepted the idea, and so she finally bent her head down to the hole and agreed with him that they should part. They decided to begin their separate journeys the very next day.

They spent the rest of the day gathering food; the woman tore off her petticoat and wrapped it around heaps of dried grapes, mushrooms and meat that the man had given her, and he took off his shirt and did the same. They spent a sleepless silent night of unspoken doubts leaning against the hole, and at dawn they clasped hands through the hole, said quiet goodbyes and turned around to walk, he with his bundle, she with a bundle and a handbag.

They each walked for several hours, with such a weight of dread and despair in their hearts as they had never known; their feet dragged, their backs bent, tears ran gently down their faces, and they each tried to recall the feel of the other's hand through the wall, but already the impression was fading, and it was very difficult to feel anything. So, grieving, they walked slowly toward the perimeter of the north and south sides of the valley, and there in the distance they could each hear strange sounds, smell strange smells, and feel strange changes in the atmosphere. They were four miles apart by now and it was not yet noon, and the way had been uphill for both of them.

At exactly the same moment in time, the man in the north and the woman in the south met strangers of the opposite sex, and these two asked them the same questions. They inquired who they were, where they lived, and where they were going. Sadly they both told the same tale, and the woman who now faced the man in the north asked him

to touch her long fair hair and made kissing mouths at him. He was immediately impassioned by this brazenness and, full of unspent vigor from the many dry years, he held her in his arms and began to make love to her, clumsily and fiercely, his own dark woman already forgotten. At the other side of the valley, she was just then succumbing to the advances of a tall dark man, a person more handsome than she could ever have visualized, raven and brown like herself, strong and passionate, and she was so filled with admiration and physical hunger that she succumbed easily to his embrace. And then the two couples parted, after long kisses and greedy sighing. As they stood up to brush their clothes in the afternoon light they chanced to look back across the valley, and in the distance saw each other, infinite specks, but each speck duplicated, and because each had just then been unfaithful with a stranger, they each knew that the other had too, that the double speck in the distance could mean only one thing.

They were immediately filled with remorse at what they had done, and longed for each other again as much as before, and because they could now see each other, even though it was so far away, they wished very much to be close together again. Having tasted full physical contact with others they now knew that no bliss in the world could match what they would feel for one another, could it be achieved. They had the instant idea that they would run to each other across the sinking plain and somehow overcome the obstacle of the wall which, from this distance, looked very small indeed. So they set off running without even saying goodbye to their lovers-that-were-not-lovers, running and breathing heavily from the unaccustomed effort.

When they were only one mile apart they could see one another quite clearly in the sharp white air which lit this part of the valley with an illusion of clarity which seemed to telescope everything distant much nearer. They paused, then, and, staring in wonder, each at the other, a pure brave kind of love lighted them up within, and it was as if they could see the pool that was the hidden soul. They began to run again, and, as the ground leveled off, the sight of them was almost lost behind the top of the wall; but this made them run the last few hundred yards even harder. At last they came up to the wall, and ran up and down at its base in joyous haste, seeking the hole. Soon they stood opposite, and the woman shouted to the man that she was going to climb the wall, and the man shouted to the woman that he was going to scale the wall, but they were so out of breath with running that their words were all muddled up and lost, and together they dropped the bundles and the bag at the base of the wall, and began to climb. It was easy to find toe and handholds in the old vines and creepers and in the crystalline hardness of the rock, and in

minutes they were near the top where the cruel spikes stood waiting. Together they made one last desperate push upwards and saw themselves close together at the narrow top of the wall; as the spikes pushed into their bodies and as the blood ran down they stared in horror, not at the pain of Death but at what was really in the heart and soul of the other. In terror they clung to one another, closer and closer, hoping that it was not true, as they embraced breast to breast across the spikes, their cheeks pressed close with blood and tears; it was then that they noticed all the other lovers impaled on the spikes.

Some were long-dead skeletons, dry and dusty, grinning skull to skull; some were mummified by the keen wind, eyes sunk in perpetual bewilderment; and some were rotten and new, astonishingly, quite new.

They turned again to see themselves, wondering dumbly at what they had seen stretching out infinitely along the wall, all the clasping lovers long gone, no kiss nor handhold there with either bliss or agony.

And very quietly they kissed as they clung and died there, impaled across the cold spiky barrier, feeling and thought growing more feeble every second.

In the north and in the south a fair haired woman and a dark haired man set off slowly to walk towards the wall, love stirring in the innermost recesses of their being.

* * * *

Josephine Saxton describes herself briefly as—

Age thirty, occupation, woman. Married to artist: Colin Saxton, three children. "The Wall" as yet only published work, but have written two novels and several stories, secret poetry writer, also cookbook.

Not science-fiction writer, knowing little science, but of that lower class *who make it up.*

Aims: full-time professional writer.

Mrs. Saxton has one thing in common with Walter Moudy: Both are new writers (although Moudy had two stories in print before this one, and a first novel since).

The contrasts—in background, interests, situations, occupations, temperament—emerge as much in the appearance of the two "bio letters" as in their content. Hers is on thin paper, typed in brown ink and elite type, under a "Leics." (Leicestershire) country address. His is on his office letterhead, from Kansas City (Missouri), secretary-typed on an IBM Executive: *Re: Biographical Data* ("The Survivor"!:

I was born and raised on a dirt farm In Barry County, Missouri, which is deep Ozark country. I was the second child in a family of eleven. *Most people would call us hillbillies, although recently the sophisticating effect of electricity and TV has somewhat blurred the image. I have approximately five or six hundred blood relatives in Barry County, and so far as I know I am the first to graduate from college.*

In this order: I have been a farm worker, rambler, powerline-pole digger, migrant fruit picker, college student (one and one-half years), assembly-line welder in a General Motors automobile plant (one year), soldier (three years), college (AB), law student (LIB), lawyer, and writer. All of my college and law school training was at Missouri University.

I am thirty-six. I have been practicing law for nine years and writing the past four years.

No Man on *Earth was the first thing I ever wrote.* [A novel, published last year—and a good one—j.m] *The* second *thing was "The Survivor."*

* * * *

THE SURVIVOR
WALTER F. MOUDY

There was a harmony in the design of the arena which an artist might find pleasing. The curved granite walls which extended upward three hundred feet from its base were polished and smooth like the sides of a bowl. A fly, perhaps a lizard, could crawl up those glistening walls—but surely not a man. The walls encircled an egg-shaped area which was precisely three thousand meters long and two thousand one hundred meters wide at its widest point. There were two large hills located on either side of the arena exactly midway from its center to its end. If you were to slice the arena crosswise, your knife would dissect a third, tree-studded hill and a small, clear lake; and the two divided halves would each be the exact mirror image of the other down to the smallest detail. If you were a farmer you would notice the rich flat soil which ran obliquely from the two larger hills toward the lake. If you were an artist you might find pleasure in contemplating the rich shades of green and brown presented by the forested lowlands at the lake's edge. A sportsman seeing the crystalline lake in the morning's first light would find his fingers itching for light tackle and wading boots. Boys, particularly city boys, would yearn to climb the two larger hills because they looked easy to climb, but not too easy. A general viewing the topography would immediately recognize that possession of the central hill would permit dominance of the lake and the surrounding lowlands.

There was something peaceful about the arena that first morning. The early-morning sun broke through a light mist and spilled over the central hill to the low dew-drenched ground beyond. There were trees with young, green leaves, and the leaves rustled softly in rhythm with the wind. There were birds in those trees, and the birds still sang, for it was spring, and they were filled with the joy of life and the beauty of the morning. A night owl, its appetite satiated now by a recent kill, perched on a dead limb of a large sycamore tree and, tucking its beak in its feathers, prepared to sleep the day away. A sleek copperhead snake, sensing the sun's approach and anticipating its soothing warmth, crawled from beneath the flat rock where it had spent the night and sought the comfort of its favorite rock ledge. A red squirrel chattered nervously as it watched the men enter the arena from the north and then, having decided that there was danger there, darted swiftly to an adjacent tree and disappeared into the security of its nest.

There were exactly one hundred of them. They stood tall and proud in their uniforms, a barely perceptible swaying motion rippling through their lines like wheat stirred by a gentle breeze. If they anticipated what was to come, they did not show it. Their every movement showed their absolute discipline. Once they had been only men—now they were killers. The hunger for blood was like a taste in their mouths; their zest for destruction like a flood which raged inside them. They were finely honed and razor keen to kill.

Their general made his last inspection. As he passed down the lines the squad captains barked a sharp order and the men froze into absolute immobility. Private Richard Starbuck heard the rasp of the general's boots against the stones as he approached. There was no other sound, not even of men breathing. From long discipline he forced his eyes to maintain their focus on the distant point he had selected, and his eyes did not waver as the general paused in front of him. They were still fixed on that same imaginary point. He did not even see the general.

Private Richard Starbuck was not thinking of death, although he knew he must surely die. He was thinking of the rifle which he felt securely on his shoulder and of the driving need he had to discharge its deadly pellets into human flesh. His urge to kill was dominant, but even so he was vaguely relieved that he had not been selected for the assassination squad (the suicide squad the men called it); for he still had a chance, a slim chance, to live; while the assassination squad was consigned to inevitable death.

A command was given and Private Starbuck permitted his tense body to relax. He glanced at his watch. Five-twenty-five. He still had an hour and thirty-five minutes to wait. There was a tenseness inside him which his relaxed body did not disclose. They taught you how to do that in training. They taught you lots of things in training.

* * * *

The TV screen was bigger than life and just as real. The color was true and the images three-dimensional. For a moment the zoom cameras scanned the silent deserted portions of the arena. The sound system was sensitive and sharp and caught the sound made by a squirrel's feet against the bark of a black oak tree. Over one hundred cameras were fixed on the arena; yet so smooth was the transition from one camera to the next that it was as though the viewer was floating over the arena. There was the sound of marching feet, and the pace of the moving cameras quickened and then shifted to the north where one hundred men were entering the arena in perfect unison, a

hundred steel-toed boots striking the earth as one. For a moment the cameras fixed on the flashing boots and the sensitive sound system recorded the thunder of men marching to war. Then the cameras flashed to the proud face of their general; then to the hard, determined faces of the men; then back again to the thundering boots. The cameras backed off to watch the column execute an abrupt halt, moved forward to focus for a moment on the general's hawklike face, and then, with the general, inspected the troops one by one, moving down the rigid lines of men and peering intently at each frozen face.

When the "at ease" order was given, the camera backed up to show an aerial view of the arena and then fixed upon one of the control towers which lined the arena's upper periphery before sweeping slowly downward and seeming to pass into the control tower. Inside the tower a distinguished gray-haired man in his mid-forties sat beside a jovial, fat-jawed man who was probably in his early fifties. There was an expectant look on their faces. Finally the gray-haired man said:

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, I'm John Ardanyon—"

"And I'm Bill Carr," the fat-jawed man said.

"And this is it—yes, this is the big one, ladies and gentlemen. The 2050 edition of the Olympic War Games. This is the day we've all been waiting for, ladies and gentlemen, and in precisely one hour and thirty-two minutes the games will be under way. Here to help describe the action is Bill Carr who is known to all of you sports fans all over the world. And with us for this special broadcast are some of the finest technicians in the business. Bill?"

"That's right, John. This year NSB has spared no expense to insure our viewing public that its 2050 game coverage will be second to none. So stay tuned to this station for the most complete, the most immediate coverage of any station. John?"

"That's right, Bill. This year NSB has installed over one hundred specially designed zoom cameras to insure complete coverage of the games. We are using the latest sonic sound equipment—so sensitive that it can detect the sound of a man's heart beating at a thousand yards. Our camera crew is highly trained in the recently developed transitional-zone technique which you just saw so effectively demonstrated during the fade-in. I think we can promise you that this time no station will be able to match the immediacy of NSB."

"Right, John. And now, less than an hour and a half before the action begins, NSB is proud to bring you this prerecorded announcement from the President of the United States. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States."

There was a brief flash of the White House lawn, a fade-out, and then:

“My fellow countrymen. When you hear these words, the beginning of the fifth meeting between the United States and Russia in the Olympic War Games will be just minutes away.

“I hope and I pray that we will be victorious. With the help of God, we shall be.

“But in our longing for victory, we must not lose sight of the primary purpose of these games. In the long run it is not whether we win or lose but that the games were played. For, my fellow citizens, we must never forget that these games are played in order that the frightening spectre of war may never again stalk our land. It is better that a few should decide the nation’s fate, than all the resources of our two nations should be mobilized to destroy the other.

“My friends, many of you do not remember the horror of the Final War of 1998. I can recall that war. I lost my father and two sisters in that war. I spent two months in a class-two fallout shelter—as many of you know. There must never be another such war. We cannot—we shall not —permit that to happen.

“The Olympic War Games are the answer—the only answer. Thanks to the Olympic War Games we are at peace. Today one hundred of our finest fighting men will meet one hundred Russian soldiers to decide whether we shall be victorious or shall go down to defeat. The loser must pay the victor reparations of ten billion dollars. The stakes are high.

“The stakes are high, but, my fellow citizens, the cost of total war is a hundred times higher. This miniature war is a thousand times less costly than total war. Thanks to the Olympic War Games, we have a kind of peace.

“And now, in keeping with the tradition established by the late President Goldstein, I hereby declare a national holiday for all persons not engaged in essential services from now until the conclusion of the games.

“To those brave men who made the team I say: the hope and the prayers of the nation go with you. May you emerge victorious.”

There was a fade-out and then the pleasant features of John Ardanyon appeared. After a short, respectful silence, he said:

“I’m sure we can all agree with the President on that. And now, here is Professor Carl Overmann to explain the computer system developed especially for NSB’s coverage of the 2050 war games.”

“Thank you, Mr. Ardanyon. This year, with the help of the Englewood system of evaluating intangible factors, we hope to start bringing you reliable predictions at the ten-percent casualty level. Now, very briefly, here is how the Englewood system works. .. .”

* * * *

Private Richard Starbuck looked at his watch. Still forty more minutes to wait. He pulled back the bolt on his rifle and checked once more to make sure that the first shell was properly positioned in the chamber. For the third time in the past twenty minutes he walked to one side and urinated on the ground. His throat seemed abnormally dry, and he removed his canteen to moisten his lips with water. He took only a small swallow because the rules permitted only one canteen of water per man, and their battle plan did not call for early possession of the lake.

A passing lizard caught his attention. He put his foot on it and squashed it slowly with the toe of his right boot. He noticed with mild satisfaction that the thing had left a small blood smear at the end of his boot. Oddly, however, seeing the blood triggered something in his mind, and for the first time he vaguely recognized the possibility that he could be hurt. In training he had not thought much about that. Mostly you thought of how it would feel to kill a man. After a while you got so that you wanted to kill. You came to love your rifle, like it was an extension of your own body. And if you could not feel its comforting presence, you felt like a part of you was missing. Still a person could be hurt. You might not die immediately. He wondered what it would be like to feel a misshapen chunk of lead tearing through his belly. The Russians would x their bullets too, probably. They do more damage that way.

It might not be so bad. He remembered a time four years ago when he had thought he was dying, and that had not been so bad. He remembered that at the time he had been more concerned about bleeding on the Martins' new couch. The Martins had always been good to him. Once they had thought they could never have a child of their own, and they had about half adopted him because his own mother worked and was too busy to bake cookies for him and his father was not interested in fishing or basketball or things like that. Even after the Martins had Cassandra, they continued to treat him like a favorite nephew. Mr. Martin took him fishing and attended all the basketball games when he was playing. And that was why when he wrecked the motor scooter and cut his head he had been more concerned about bleeding on the Martins' new couch than about dying, although he had felt that he was surely dying. He remembered that his first thought upon regaining consciousness was one of self-importance. The Martins had looked worried and their nine-year-old daughter, Cassandra, was looking at the blood running down his face and was crying. That was when he felt he might be dying. Dying had seemed a strangely appropriate thing to do, and he had felt an urge to do it well and had begun to assure them that he was all right. And, to his slight disappointment, he was.

Private Richard Starbuck, formerly a star forward on the Center High basketball team, looked at his watch and wondered, as he waited, if being shot in the gut would be anything like cutting your head on the pavement. It was funny he should have thought of that now. He hadn't thought of the Martins for months. He wondered if they would be watching. He wondered, if they did, if they would recognize the sixteen-year-old boy who had bled on their living room couch four years ago. He wondered if he recognized that sixteen-year-old boy himself.

* * * *

Professor Carl Overmann had finished explaining the marvels of the NSB computer system; a mousy little man from the sociology department of a second rate university had spent ten minutes assuring the TV audience that one of the important psychological effects of the TV coverage of the games was that it allowed the people to satisfy the innate blood lust vicariously and strongly urged the viewers to encourage the youngsters to watch; a minister had spent three minutes explaining that the miniature war could serve to educate mankind to the horrors of war; an economics professor was just finishing a short lecture on the economic effects of victory or defeat.

"Well, there you have it, ladies and gentlemen," Bill Carr said when the economics professor had finished. "You all know there's a lot at stake for both sides. And now— what's that? You what? Just a minute, folks. I think we may have another NSB first." He looked off camera to his right. "Is he there? Yes, indeed, ladies and gentlemen, NSB has done it again. For the first time we are going to have—well, here he is, ladies and gentlemen, General George W. Caldwell, chief of the Olympic War Games training section. General, it's nice to have you with us."

"Thank you, Bill. It's good to be here."

"General, I'm sure our audience already knows this, but just so there will be no misunderstanding, it's not possible for either side to communicate to their people in the arena now. Is that right?"

"That's right, Bill, or I could not be here. An electronic curtain, as it were, protects the field from any attempt to communicate. From here on out the boys are strictly on their own."

"General, do you care to make any predictions on the outcome of the games?"

"Yes, Bill, I may be going out on a limb here, but I think our boys are ready. I can't say that I agree with the neutral-money boys who have the United States a six-to-five underdog. I say we'll win."

"General, there is some thought that our defeat in the games four years ago was caused by an inferior battle plan. Do you care to comment on that?"

"No comment."

"Do you have any explanation for why the United States team has lost the last two games after winning the first two?"

"Well, let me say this. Our defeat in '42 could well have been caused by overconfidence. After all, we had won the first two games rather handily. As I recall we won the game in '38 by four survivors. But as for our defeat in '46—well, your estimate on that one is as good as mine. I will say this: General Hanley was much criticized for an unimaginative battle plan by a lot of so-called experts. Those so-called experts—those armchair generals—were definitely wrong. General Hanley's battle strategy was sound in every detail. I've studied his plans at considerable length, I can assure you."

"Perhaps the training program—?"

"Nonsense. My own exec was on General Hanley's training staff. With only slight modifications it's the same program we used for this year's games."

"Do you care to comment on your own battle plans, General?"

"Well, Bill, I wouldn't want to kill the suspense for your TV audience. But I can say this: we'll have a few surprises this year. No one can accuse us of conservative tactics, I can tell you that."

"How do you think our boys will stack up against the Russians, General?"

"Bill, on a man to man basis, I think our boys will stack up very well indeed. In fact, we had men in the drop-out squads who could have made our last team with no trouble at all. I'd say this year's crop is probably twenty percent improved."

"General, what do you look for in selecting your final squads?"

"Bill, I'd say that more than anything else we look for desire. Of course, a man has to be a good athlete, but if he doesn't have that killer instinct, as we say, he won't make the team. I'd say it's desire."

"Can you tell us how you pick the men for the games?"

"Yes, Bill, I think I can, up to a point. We know the Russians use the same system, and, of course, there has been quite a bit written on the subject in the popular press in recent months.

"Naturally, we get thousands of applicants. We give each of them a tough screening test—physical, mental, and psychological. Most applicants are eliminated in the first test. You'd be surprised at some of the boys who apply. The ones who are left—just under two thousand for this year's games—are put through an intensive six-month training course. During this training period we begin to get our first drop-outs, the men who somehow got past our screening system

and who will crack up under pressure.

"Next comes a year of training in which the emphasis is on conditioning."

"Let me interrupt here for just a moment, General, if I may. This conditioning—is this a type of physical training?"

The general smiled tolerantly. "No, Bill, this is a special type of conditioning—both mental and physical. The men are conditioned to war. They are taught to recognize and to hate the enemy. They are taught to react instantly to every possible hostile stimuli. They learn to love their weapons and to distrust all else."

"I take it that an average training day must leave the men very little free time."

"Free time!" The general now seemed more shocked than amused. "Free time indeed. Our training program leaves no time free. We don't coddle our boys. After all, Bill, these men are training for war. No man is permitted more than two hours' consecutive sleep. We have an average of four alerts every night.

"Actually the night alerts are an important element in our selection as well as our training program. We have the men under constant observation, of course. You can tell a lot about how a man responds to an alert. Of course, all of the men are conditioned to come instantly awake with their rifles in their hands. But some would execute a simultaneous roll-away movement while at the same time cocking and aiming their weapons in the direction of the hostile sound which signaled the alert."

"How about the final six months, General?"

"Well, Bill, of course, I can't give away all our little tricks during those last six months. I can tell you in a general sort of way that this involved putting battle plans on a duplicate of the arena itself."

"And these hundred men who made this year's team—I presume they were picked during the last six months training?"

"No, Bill, actually we only made our final selection last night. You see, for the first time in two years these men have had some free time. We give them two days off before the games begin. How the men react to this enforced inactivity can tell us a lot about their level of readiness. I can tell you we have an impatient bunch of boys out there."

"General, it's ten minutes to game time. Do you suppose our team may be getting a little nervous down there?"

"Nervous? I suppose the boys may be a little tensed up. But they'll be all right just as soon as the action starts."

"General, I want to thank you for coming by. I'm sure our TV audience has found this brief discussion most enlightening."

"It was my pleasure, Bill."

“Well, there you have it, ladies and gentlemen. You heard it from the man who should know—Lieutenant General George W. Caldwell himself. He picks the United States team to go all the way. John?”

“Thank you, Bill. And let me say that there has been considerable sentiment for the United States team in recent weeks among the neutrals. These are the men who set the odds—the men who bet their heads but never their hearts. In fact at least one oddsmaker in Stockholm told me last night that he had stopped taking anything but six-to-five bets, and you pick ‘em. In other words, this fight is rated just about even here just a few minutes before game time.”

“Right, John, it promises to be an exciting day, so stay tuned to this station for full coverage.”

“I see the troops are beginning to stir. It won’t be long now. Bill, while we wait I think it might be well, for the benefit of you younger people, to tell the folks just what it means to be a survivor in one of these games. Bill?”

“Right, John. Folks, the survivor, or survivors as the case may be, will truly become a *Survivor. A Survivor,* as most of you know, is exempt from all laws; he has unlimited credit; in short, he can literally do no wrong. And that’s what those men are shooting for today. John.”

“Okay, Bill. And now as our cameras scan the Russian team, let us review very briefly the rules of the game. Each side has one hundred men divided into ten squads each consisting of nine men and one squad captain. Each man has a standard automatic rifle, four hand grenades, a canteen of water, and enough food to last three days. All officers are armed with side arms in addition to their automatic rifles. Two of the squads are armed with air-cooled light machine-guns, and one squad is armed with a mortar with one thousand rounds of ammunition. And those, ladies and gentlemen, are the rules of the game. Once the games begin the men are on their own. There are no more rules—except, of course, that the game is not over until one side or the other has no more survivors. Bill?”

“Okay, John. Well, folks, here we are just seconds away from game time. NSB will bring you live each exciting moment—so stand by. We’re waiting for the start of the 2050 Olympic War Games. Ten seconds now. Six. Four, three, two, one—the games are underway, and look at ‘em go!”

The cameras spanned back from the arena to give a distant view of the action. Squad one peeled off from the main body and headed toward the enemy rear at a fast trot. They were armed with rifles and grenades. Squads two, three, and four went directly toward the high hill in the American sector where they broke out entrenching tools and began to dig in. Squads five and six took one of the light machine

guns and marched at double time to the east of the central hill where they concealed themselves in the brush and waited. Squads seven through ten were held in reserve where they occupied themselves by burying the ammunition and other supplies at predetermined points and in beginning the preparation of their own defense perimeters.

The cameras swung briefly to the Russian sector. Four Russian squads had already occupied the high hill in the Russian sector, and a rifle squad was being rushed to the central hill located on the north-south dividing line. A Russian machine gun squad was digging in to the south of the lake to establish a base of fire on the north side of the central hill.

The cameras returned to the American squads five and six, which were now deployed along the east side of the central hill. The cameras moved in from above the entrenched machine gunner, paused momentarily on his right hand, which was curved lovingly around the trigger guard while his middle finger stroked the trigger itself in a manner almost obscene, and then followed the gunner's unblinking eyes to the mist-enshrouded base of the central hill where the point man of the Russian advance squad was cautiously testing his fate in a squirming, crawling advance on the lower slopes of the hill.

"This could be it!" Bill Carr's booming voice exploded from the screen like a shot. "This could be the first skirmish, ladies and gentlemen. John, how does it look to you?"

"Yes, Bill, it looks like we will probably get our first action in the east-central sector. Quite a surprise, too, Bill. A lot of experts felt that the American team would concentrate its initial push on control of the central hill. Instead, the strategy appears to be—at least as it appears from here—to concede the central hill to the Russian team but to make them pay for it. You can't see it on your screens just now, ladies and gentlemen, but the American mortar squad is now positioned on the north slope of the north hill and is ready to fire."

"All right, John. Folks, here in our booth operating as spotter for the American team is Colonel Bullock of the United States Army. Our Russian spotter is Brigadier General Vorsilov, who will from time to time give us his views on Russian strategy. Colonel Bullock, do you care to comment?"

"Well, I think it's fairly obvious, Bill, that—"

His words were interrupted by the first chilling chatter of the American light machine gun. Tracer bullets etched their brilliant way through the morning air to seek and find human flesh. Four mortar rounds, fired in rapid succession, arched over the low hill and came screaming a tale of death and destruction. The rifle squad opened fire with compelling accuracy. The Russian line halted, faltered, reformed, and charged up the central hill. Three men made it to the sheltering

rocks on the hill's upper slope. The squad captain and six enlisted men lay dead or dying on the lower slopes. As quickly as it had begun the firing ended.

"How about that!" Bill Carr exclaimed. "First blood for the American team. What a fantastic beginning to these 2050 war games, ladies and gentlemen. John, how about that?"

"Right, Bill. Beautifully done. Brilliantly conceived and executed with marvelous precision. An almost unbelievable maneuver by the American team that obviously caught the Russians completely off guard. Did you get the casualty figures on that first skirmish, Bill?"

"I make it five dead and two seriously wounded, John. Now keep in mind, folks, these figures are unofficial. Ed, can you give us a closeup on that south slope?"

The cameras scanned the hill first from a distance and then zoomed in to give a closeup of each man who lay on the bleak southern slope. The Russian captain was obviously dead with a neat rifle bullet through his forehead. The next man appeared to be sleeping peacefully. There was not a mark visible on his body; yet he too was dead as was demonstrated when the delicate sonic sound system was focused on his corpse without disclosing the whisper of a heart beat. The third man was still living, although death was just minutes away. For him it would be a peaceful death, for he was unconscious and was quietly leaking his life away from a torn artery in his neck. The camera rested next upon the shredded corpse of the Russian point man who had been the initial target for so many rifles. He lay on his stomach, and there were nine visible wounds in his back. The camera showed next a closeup view of a young man's face frozen in the moment of death, blue eyes, luster-less now and pale in death, framed by a face registering the shock of war's ultimate reality, his lips half opened still as if to protest his fate or to ask for another chance. The camera moved next to a body lying fetal-like near the top of the hill hardly two steps from the covering rocks where the three surviving squad members had found shelter. The camera then moved slowly down the slope seeking the last casualty. It found him on a pleasant, grassy spot beneath a small oak tree. A mortar fragment had caught him in the lower belly and his guts were spewed out on the grass like an overturned bucket of sand. He was whimpering softly, and with his free left hand was trying with almost comic desperation to place his entrails back inside his belly.

"Well, there you have it, folks," Bill Carr said. "It's official now. You saw it for yourselves thanks to our fine camera technicians. Seven casualties confirmed. John, I don't believe the American team has had its first casualty yet, is that right?"

"That's right, Bill. The Russian team apparently was caught

completely off guard."

"Colonel Bullock, would you care to comment on what you've seen so far?"

"Yes, Bill, I think it's fair to say that this first skirmish gives the American team a decided advantage. I would like to see the computer's probability reports before going too far out on a limb, but I'd say the odds are definitely in favor of the American team at this stage. General Caldwell's election not to take the central hill has paid a handsome dividend here early in the games."

"General Vorsilov, would you care to give us the Russian point of view?"

"I do not agree with my American friend, Colonel Bullock," the general said with a crisp British accent. "The fourth Russian squad was given the mission to take the central hill. The central hill has been taken and is now controlled by the Russian team. Possession of the central hill provides almost absolute dominance of the lake and surrounding low land. Those of you who have studied military history know how important that can be, particularly in the later stages of the games. I emphatically do not agree that the first skirmish was a defeat. Possession of the hill is worth a dozen men."

"Comments, Colonel Bullock?"

"Well, Bill, first of all, I don't agree that the Russian team has possession of the hill. True they have three men up there, but those men are armed with nothing but rifles and hand grenades—and they are not dug in. Right now the central hill is up for grabs. I—"

"Just a minute, Colonel. Pardon this interruption, but our computer has the first probability report. And here it is! The prediction is for an American victory with a probability rating of 57.2. How about that, folks? Here early in the first day the American team, which was a decided underdog in this year's games has jumped to a substantial lead."

Colonel Bullock spoke: "Bill, I want you to notice that man there —over there on the right-hand side of your screen. Can we have a closeup on that? That's a runner, Bill. A lot of the folks don't notice little things like that They want to watch the machine gunners or the point man, but that man there could have a decided effect on the outcome of these games, Bill."

"I presume he's carrying a message back to headquarters, eh Colonel?"

"That's right, Bill, and a very important message, I'll warrant. You see an attack on the central hill from the east or south sides would be disastrous. The Russians, of course, hold the south hill. From their positions there they could subject our boys to a blistering fire from the rear on any attack made from the south. That runner was sent back

with word that there are only three Russians on the hill. I think we can expect an immediate counterattack from the north as soon as the message has been delivered. In the meantime, squads five and six will maintain their positions in the eastern sector and try to prevent any reinforcements of the Russian position."

"Thank you, Colonel, for that enlightening analysis, and now, folks—" He broke off when the runner to whom the Colonel referred stumbled and fell.

"Wait a minute, folks. He's been hit! He's down! The runner has been shot. You saw it here, folks. Brilliant camera work. Simply great. John, how about that?"

"Simply tremendous, Bill. A really great shot. Ed, can we back the cameras up and show the folks that action again? Here it is in slow motion, folks. Now you see him (who is that, Colonel? Ted Krogan? Thank you, Colonel) here he is, folks, Private Ted Krogan from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Here he is coming around the last clump of bushes—now watch this, folks—he gets about half way across the clearing —and there it is, folks, you can actually see the bullet strike his throat—a direct hit. Watch this camera close up of his face, you'll see him die in front of your eyes. And there he goes—he rolls over and not a move. He was dead before he hit the ground. Bill, did any of our cameras catch where that shot came from?"

"Yes, John, the Russians have slipped a two man sniper team in on our left flank. This could be serious, John. I don't think our boys know the runner was hit."

"Only time will tell, Bill. Only time will tell. Right now, I believe we have our first lull. Let's take thirty seconds for our stations to identify themselves."

* * * *

Private Richard Starbuck's first day was not at all what he had expected. He was with the second squad, one of the three squads which were dug in on the north hill. After digging his foxhole he had spent the day staring at the south and central hills. He had heard the brief skirmish near the central hill, but he had yet to see his first Russian. He strained so hard to see something that sometimes his eyes played tricks on him. Twice his mind gave movement to a distant shadow. Once he nearly fired at the sudden sound of a rabbit in the brush. His desire to see the enemy was almost overpowering. It reminded him of the first time Mr. Martin had taken him fishing on the lake. He had been thirteen at the time. He had stared at that still, white cork for what had seemed like hours. He remembered he had

even prayed to God to send a fish along that would make the cork go under. His mind had played tricks on him that day too, and several times he had fancied the cork was moving when it was not. He was not praying today, of course—except the intensity of his desire was something like a prayer.

He spent the entire first day in a foxhole without seeing anything or hearing anything except an occasional distant sniper's bullet. When the sun went down, he brought out his rations and consumed eighteen hundred calories. As soon as it was dark, his squad was to move to the south slope and prepare their defensive positions. He knew the Russians would be similarly occupied. It was maddening to know that for a time the enemy would be exposed and yet be relatively safe because of the covering darkness.

When it was completely dark, his squad captain gave the signal, and the squad moved out to their predetermined positions and began to dig in. So far they were still following the battle plan to the letter. He dug his foxhole with care, building a small ledge half way down on which to sit and placing some foliage on the bottom to keep it from becoming muddy, and then he settled down to wait. Somehow it was better at night. He even found himself wishing that they would not come tonight. He discovered that he could wait.

Later he slept. How long, he did not know. He only knew that when he awoke he heard a sound of air parting followed by a hard, thundering impact that shook the ground. His first instinct was to action, and then he remembered that there was nothing he could do, so he hunched down as far as possible in his foxhole and waited. He knew real fear now—the kind of fear that no amount of training or conditioning can eliminate. He was a living thing whose dominant instinct was to continue living. He did not want to die hunched down in a hole in the ground. The flesh along his spine quivered involuntarily with each fractional warning whoosh which preceded the mortar's fall. Now he knew that he could die, knew it with his body as well as with his mind. A shell landed nearby, and he heard a shrill, womanlike scream. Bill Smith had been hit. His first reaction was one of relief. It had been Bill Smith and not he. But why did he have to scream? Bill Smith had been one of the toughest men in the squad. There ought to be more dignity than that. There ought to be a better way of dying than lying helpless in a hole and waiting for chance or fate in the form of some unseen, impersonal gunner, who probably was firing an assigned pattern anyhow, to bring you life or death.

In training, under conditions of simulated danger, he had grown to rely upon the solidarity of the squad. They faced danger together; together they could whip the world. But now he knew that in the end

war was a lonely thing. He could not reach out into the darkness and draw courage from the huddled forms of his comrades from the second squad. He took no comfort from the fact that the other members of the squad were just as exposed as he. The fear which he discovered in himself was a thing which had to be endured alone, and he sensed now that when he died, that too would have to be endured alone.

* * * *

"Well, folks, this is Bill Carr still bringing you our continuous coverage of the 2050 Olympic War Games. John Ardanyon is getting a few hours' sleep right now, but he'll be back at four o'clock.

"For the benefit of those viewers who may have tuned in late, let me say again that NSB will bring continuous coverage. Yes sir, folks, this year, thanks to our special owl-eye cameras, we can give you shots of the night action with remarkable clarity.

"Well, folks, the games are almost eighteen hours old, and here to bring you the latest casualty report is my old friend Max Sanders. Max?"

"Thank you, Bill, and good evening, ladies and gentlemen. The latest casualty reports—and these are confirmed figures. Let me repeat —these are confirmed figures. For the Russian team: twenty-two dead, and eight incapacitated wounded. For the American team: seventeen dead, and only six incapacitated wounded."

"Thank you, Max. Folks, our computer has just recomputed the odds, and the results are—what's this? Folks, here is a surprise. A rather unpleasant surprise. Just forty-five minutes ago the odds on an American victory were 62.1. Those odds, ladies and gentlemen, have just fallen to 53.0. I'm afraid I don't understand this at all. Professor Overmann, what do you make of this?"

"I'm afraid the computer has picked up a little trouble in the southwestern sector, Bill. As I explained earlier, the computer's estimates are made up of many factors— and the casualty reports are just one of them. Can you give us a long shot of the central hill, Ed? There. There you see one of the factors which undoubtedly has influenced the new odds. The Russian team has succeeded in reinforcing their position on the central hill with a light machine gun squad. This goes back to the first American casualty earlier today when the messenger failed to get word through for the counterattack.

"Now give me a medium shot of the American assassination squad. Back it up a little more, will you, Ed? There, that's it. I was afraid of that. What has happened, Bill, is that, unknowingly, the

American squad has been spotted by a Russian reserve guard. That could mean trouble."

"I see. Well, that explains the sudden drop in the odds, folks. Now the question is, can the American assassination squad pull it off under this handicap? We'll keep the cameras over here, folks, until we have an answer. The other sectors are relatively quiet now except for sporadic mortar fire."

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For the first time since the skirmish which had begun the battle, the cameras were able to concentrate their sustained attention on one small area of the arena. The assassination squad moved slowly, torturously slow, through the brush and the deep grass which dotted the southwest sector. They had successfully infiltrated the Russian rear. For a moment the camera switched to the Russian sentry who had discovered the enemy's presence and who was now reporting to his captain. Orders were given and in a very few minutes the light machine gun had been brought back from the lake and was in position to fire on the advancing American squad. Two Russian reserve squads were positioned to deliver a deadly crossfire on the patrol. To the men in the arena it must have been pitch dark. Even on camera there was an eerie, uneasy quality to the light that lent a ghostlike effect to the faces of the men whose fates had been determined by an unsuspected meeting with a Russian sentry. Death would have been exceedingly quick and profitless for the ten-man squad had not a Russian rifleman fired his rifle prematurely. As it was, the squad captain and six men were killed in the first furious burst of fire. The three survivors reacted instantly and disappeared into the brush. One died there noiselessly from a chest wound inflicted in the ambush. Another managed to kill two Russian infantrymen with hand grenades before he died. In the darkness the Russian captain became confused and sent word to his general that the entire squad had been destroyed. The general came to inspect the site and was instantly killed at short range by the lone surviving member of the assassination squad. By a series of fortuitous events the squad had accomplished its primary purpose. The Russian general was dead, and in less than two seconds so was the last man in the assassination squad.

"Well, there you have it, ladies and gentlemen. High drama here in the early hours of the morning as an American infantry squad cuts down the Russian general. Those of you who have watched these games before will know that some of the most exciting action takes place at night. In a few minutes we should have the latest probability

report, but until then, how do you see it, Colonel Bullock?"

"Bill, I think the raiding squad came out of that very well indeed. They were discovered and boxed in by the enemy, yet they still fulfilled their primary mission—they killed the Russian general. It's bound to have an effect."

"General Vorsilov, do you care to comment, sir?"

"I think your computer will confirm that three for ten is a good exchange, even if one of those three happens to be a general. Of course, we had an unlucky break when one of our soldiers accidentally discharged his weapon. Otherwise we would have suffered no casualties. As for the loss of General Sarlov, no general has ever survived the games, and I venture to say no general ever will. The leadership of the Russian team will now descend by predetermined selection to the senior Russian captain."

"Thank you, General. Well, folks, here is the latest computer report. This is going to disappoint a lotta people. For an American victory, the odds now stand at 49.1. Of course, let me emphasize, folks, that such a small difference at this stage is virtually meaningless.

"Well, we seem to have another lag, folks. While our cameras scan the arena, let me remind you that each morning of the games NSB will be bringing you a special capsule re-run of the highlights of the preceding night's action.

"Well, folks, things seem to be a little quiet right now, but don't go away. In the games, anything can happen and usually does. We lost ten good men in that last action, so maybe this is a good time to remind you ladies and gentlemen that this year NSB is giving to the parents of each one of these boys a special tape recording of the action in the arena complete with sound effects and a brand-new uniflex projector. Thus each parent will be able to see their son's participation in the games. This is a gift that I'm sure will be treasured throughout the years.

"NSB would like to take this opportunity to thank the following sponsors for relinquishing their time so we could bring you this special broadcast. . . ."

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Private Richard Starbuck watched the dawn edge its way over the arena. He had slept perhaps a total of two hours last night, and already a feeling of unreality was invading his senses. When the roll was called, he answered with a voice which surprised him by its impersonalness: "Private Richard Starbuck, uninjured, ammunition

expended; zero." Three men did not answer the roll. One of the three was the squad captain. That meant that Sergeant Collins was the new squad captain. Through discipline and habit he broke out his breakfast ration and forced himself to eat. Then he waited again.

Later that morning he fired his first shot. He caught a movement on the central hill, and this time it was not a shadow. He fired quickly, but he missed, and his target quickly disappeared. There was heavy firing in the mid-eastern sector, but he was no longer even curious as to what was going on unless it affected his own position. All day long he fired whenever he saw something that could have been a man on either of the Russian-held hills. Sometimes he fired when he saw nothing because it made him feel better. The Russians returned the fire, but neither side appeared to be doing any real damage against a distant, well-entrenched enemy.

Toward evening Captain Collins gave orders for him to take possession of Private Bill Smith's foxhole. It seemed like a ridiculous thing to do in broad daylight when in a couple more hours he could accomplish the same thing in almost perfect safety. They obviously intended for him to draw fire to expose the Russian positions. For a moment he hesitated, feeling the hate for Collins wash over him like a flood. Then he grasped his rifle, leaped from his hole, and ran twenty yards diagonally down the hill to Smith's foxhole. It seemed to him as if the opposing hills had suddenly come alive. He flung himself face first to the ground and landed grotesquely on top of the once tough body of Private Bill Smith. He felt blood trickling down his arm, and for a moment he thought he had been hit, but it was only a scratch from a projecting rock. His own squad had been firing heavily, and he heard someone say: "I got one. B'god I got one." He twisted around in the foxhole trying to keep his head safely below the surface, and then he saw what it was that had made Bill Smith scream. The mortar had wrenched his left arm loose at the elbow. It dangled there now, hung in place only by a torn shirt and a small piece of skin. He braced himself and began to edge the body up past him in the foxhole. He managed to get below it and heave it over the side. He heard the excited volley of shots which followed the body's tumbling course down the hill. Somehow in his exertions he had finished wrenching the arm loose from the body. He reached down and threw that too over the side of the foxhole. And now this particular bit of earth belonged to him. He liked it better than his last one. He felt he had earned it.

The night brought a return of the mortar fire. This time he didn't care. This time he could sleep, although there was a slight twitching motion on the left side of his face and he woke up every two hours for no reason at all.

* * * *

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, this is John Ardanyon bringing you the start of the third day of the 2050 Olympic War Games.

"And what a night it's been, ladies and gentlemen. In a moment we'll bring you the highlights of last night's action, but first here is Bill Carr to bring you up to date on the vital statistics."

"Thank you, John. Folks, we're happy to say that in the last few hours the early trend of the night's action has been reversed and the American team once again has a substantial lead. Squads five and six were wiped out in an early-evening engagement in the mid-eastern sector, but they gave a good account of themselves. The Russians lost eleven men and a light machine gun in their efforts to get this thorn out of their side. And I'm happy to say the American light machine gun carried by squad six was successfully destroyed before the squad was overrun. But the big news this morning is the success of the American mortar and sniper squads. Our mortars accounted for six dead and two seriously wounded as opposed to only two killed and one wounded by the Russian mortars. Our sniper squad, working in two-man teams, was successful in killing five men; whereas we only lost one man to enemy sniper action last night. We'll have a great shot coming up, folks, showing Private Cecil Harding from Plainview, New Jersey, killing a Russian captain in his sleep with nothing more than a sharp rock."

"Right, Bill, but before we show last night's highlights, I'm sure the folks would like to know that the score now stands forty-two fighting men for the American team as opposed to only thirty-seven for the Russians. Computer-wise that figures out to a 52.5 probability for the American team. I'm sure that probability figure would be higher if the Russians were not positioned on that central hill."

"And here now are the high spots of the night's action..."

* * * *

On the morning of the third day, word was spread that the American general had been killed. Private Richard Starbuck did not care. He realized now that good generalship was not going to preserve his life. So far chance seemed the only decisive factor. The mortar fire grew heavier, and the word was given to prepare for an attack on the hill. He gripped his rifle, and as he waited, he hoped they would come. He wanted to see, to face his enemy. He wanted to feel again that man had the power to control his own destiny.

A few minutes after noon it began to rain, a chilling spring rain that drizzled slowly and soaked in next to the skin. The enemy mortar ceased firing. The man in the foxhole next to his was laughing somewhat hysterically and claiming he had counted the Russian mortar fire and that they had now exploded eight hundred of their thousand rounds. It seemed improbable; nevertheless Private Starbuck heard the story spread from foxhole to foxhole and presently he even began to believe it himself.

Toward evening, the sun came out briefly, and the mortars commenced firing again. This time, however, the shells landed on the far side of the hill. There was an answering fire from the American mortar, although it seemed a senseless duel when neither gunner could get a fix on the other. The duel continued after nightfall, and then, suddenly, there was silence from the American sector. In a few minutes, his worst fears were confirmed when a runner brought orders to fall back to new positions. An unhappy chance round had knocked out the American mortar.

There were five men left in his squad. They managed to withdraw from the south slope of the hill without further losses. Their new general, Captain Paulson, had a meeting of his surviving officers in Private Starbuck's hearing. The situation was not good, but before going into purely defensive positions, two things must be accomplished. The enemy machine gun and mortar must be destroyed. Squads seven and eight, who had been in reserve for a time and who had suffered the fewest casualties, were assigned the task. It must be done tonight. If the enemy's heavy weapons could be destroyed while the Americans still maintained possession of their remaining light machine gun, their position would be favorable. Otherwise their chances were fading. The mortar shells for the now useless American mortar were to be destroyed immediately to prevent their possible use by the enemy. And, the general added almost as an afterthought, at sunrise the second squad will attack and take the central hill. They would be supported by the light machine gun if, by then, the enemy mortar had been put out of action. Questions? There were many, but none were asked.

* * * *

"Colonel Bullock, this is an unusual development. Would you tell us what General Paulson has in mind?"

"Well, Bill, I think it must be pretty obvious even to the men in the field that the loss of the American mortar has drastically changed the situation. An unfortunate occurrence, unfortunate indeed. The

probability report is now only 37.6 in favor of the American team. Of course, General Paulson doesn't have a computer, but I imagine he's arrived at pretty much the same conclusion.

"The two squads—seven and eight, I believe—which you see on your screens are undoubtedly being sent out in a desperation attempt—no, not desperation—in a courageous attempt to destroy the enemy mortar and light machine gun. It's a good move. I approve. Of course, you won't find this one in the books, but the fact is that at this stage of the game, the pre-determined battle plans are of ever-decreasing importance."

"General Vorsilov?"

"The Americans are doing the only thing they can do, Mr. Carr, but it's only a question of time now. You can rest assured that the Russian team will be alert to this very maneuver."

"Well, stand by, folks. This is still anybody's game. The games are not over yet—not by a long shot. Don't go away. This could be the key maneuver of the games. John?"

"While we're waiting, Bill, I'm sure the folks would like to hear a list of the new records which have already been set in this fifth meeting between the United States and Russia in the Olympic War Games. Our first record came early in the games when the American fifth and sixth squads startled the world with a brilliant demonstration of firepower and shattering the old mark set back in 2042 by killing seven men in just. . ."

* * * *

On the morning of the fifth day Private Starbuck moved out as the point man for the assault on the central hill. He had trained on a replica of the hill hundreds of times, and he knew it as well as he knew the back of his own hand. Squad seven had knocked out the enemy mortar last night, so they had the support of their own light machine gun for at least part of the way. Squad eight had failed in their mission and had been killed to the last man. Private Starbuck only hoped the Russian machine gun was not in position to fire on the assault team.

At first it was like maneuvers. Their own machine gun delivered a blistering fire twenty yards ahead of them and the five squad members themselves fired from the hip as they advanced. There was only occasional and weak counter-fire. They were eight yards from the top, and he was beginning to hope that, by some miracle spawned by a grotesque god, they were going to make it. Then it came. Grenades came rolling down from above, and a sustained volley of rifle-fire

came red hot from the depths of hell. He was hit twice in the first volley. Once in the hip, again in the shoulder. He would have gotten up, would have tried to go forward, but Captain Collins fell dead on top of him and he could not. A grenade exploded three feet away. He felt something jar his cheek and knew he had been hit again. Somehow it was enough. Now he could die. He had done enough. Blood ran down his face and into his left eye, but he made no attempt to wipe it away. He would surely die now. He hoped it would be soon.

"It doesn't look too good, folks. Not good at all. Colonel Bullock?"

* * * *

"I'm afraid I have to agree, Bill. The American probability factor is down to 16.9, and right now I couldn't quarrel with the computer at all. The Russians still have sixteen fighting men, while the Americans are down to nine. The American team will undoubtedly establish a defense position around the light machine gun on the north hill, but with the Russians still in control of the central hill and still in possession of their own machine gun, it appears pretty hopeless. Pretty hopeless indeed."

* * * *

He owed his life during the next few minutes to the fact that he was able to maintain consciousness. The firing had ceased all about him, and for a time he heard nothing, not even the sound of distant gun fire. This is death, he thought. Death is when you can't hear the guns any longer. Then he heard the sound of boots. He picked out a spot in the sky and forced his eyes to remain on that spot He wished to die in peace, and they might not let him die in peace. After a while the boots moved on.

He lost consciousness shortly after that. When he awoke, it was dark. He was not dead yet, for he could hear the sounds of guns again. Let them kill each other. He was out of it. It really was not such a bad way to die, if only it wouldn't take so long. He could tolerate the pain, but he hated the waiting.

While he waited, a strange thing happened. It was as though his spirit passed from his body and he could see himself lying there on the hill. Poor forlorn body to lie so long upon a hill. Would they write poems and sing songs about Private Richard Starbuck like they did four years ago for Sergeant Ernie Stevens? No, no poems for this lonely body lying on a hill waiting to die. Sergeant Stevens had killed

six men before he died. So far as he knew he had killed none.

In the recruiting pamphlet they told you that your heirs would receive one hundred thousand dollars if you died in the games. Was that why he signed up? No, no, he was willing to die now, but not for that. Surely he had had a better reason than that. Why had he done such a crazy thing? Was it the chance to be a survivor? No, not that either. Suddenly he realized something the selection committee had known long ago: he had volunteered for no other reason than the fact there was a war to be fought, and he had not wanted to be left out.

He thought of the cameras next. Had they seen him on TV? Had all the girls, all the people in his home town been watching? Had his dad watched? Had Mr. and Mrs. Martin and their daughter watched? Had they seen him when he had drawn fire by changing foxholes? Were they watching now to see if he died well?

Toward morning, he began to wonder if he could hold out. There was only one thing left for him to do and that was to die as quietly and peacefully as possible. Yet it was not an easy thing to do, and now his wounds were beginning to hurt again. Twice he heard the boots pass nearby, and each time he had to fight back an impulse to call out to them so they could come hurry death. He did not do it. Someone might be watching, and he wanted them to be proud of him.

At daybreak there was a wild flurry of rifle and machine gun fire, and then, suddenly, there was no sound, no movement, nothing but silence. Perhaps now he could die.

* * * *

The sad, dejected voice of Bill Carr was saying ". . . all over. It's all over, folks. We're waiting now for the lights to come on in the arena—the official signal that the games are over. It was close—but close only counts in horse-shoes, as the saying goes. The American team made a fine last stand. They almost pulled it off. I make out only three Russian survivors, John. Is that right?"

"Just three, Bill, and one of those is wounded in the arm. Well, ladies and gentlemen, we had a very exciting finish. We're waiting now for the arena lights to come on. Wait a minute! Something's wrong! The lights are not coming on! I thought for a moment the official scorer was asleep at the switch. Bill, can you find out what the situation is? This damned computer still gives the American team a 1.4 probability factor."

"We've located it, John. Our sonic sound system has located a lone American survivor. Can you get the cameras on the central hill over there? There he is, folks. Our spotters in the booth have just

identified him as Private Richard Starbuck from Centerville, Iowa. He seems badly wounded, but he's still alive. The question is: can he fight? He's not moving, but his heart is definitely beating and we know where there's life, there's hope."

"Right, Bill. And you can bet the three Russian survivors are a pretty puzzled group right now. They don't know what's happened. They can't figure out why the lights have not come on. Two minutes ago they were shouting and yelling a victory chant that now seems to have been premature. Ed, give us a camera on that north hill. Look at this, ladies and gentlemen. The three Russian survivors have gone berserk. Literally berserk—they are shooting and clubbing the bodies of the American dead. Don't go away, folks . . ."

* * * *

He began to fear he might not die. His wounds had lost their numbness and had begun to throb. He heard the sounds of guns and then of boots. Why wouldn't they leave him alone? Surely the war was over. He had nothing to do with them. One side or another had won—so why couldn't they leave him alone? The boots were coming closer, and he sensed that they would not leave him alone this time. A sudden rage mingled with his pain, and he knew he could lie there no longer. For the next few seconds he was completely and utterly insane. He pulled the pin on the grenade which had been pressing against his side and threw it blindly in the direction of the sound of the boots. With an instinct gained in two years of intense training, he rolled to his belly and began to fire at the blurred forms below him. He did not stop firing even when the blurred shapes ceased to move. He did not stop firing until his rifle clicked on an empty chamber. Only then did he learn that the blurred shapes were Russian soldiers.

* * * *

They healed his wounds. His shoulder would always be a little stiff, but his leg healed nicely, leaving him without a trace of a limp. There was a jagged scar on his jaw, but they did wonders with plastic surgery these days and unless you knew it was there, you would hardly notice it. They put him through a two-month reconditioning school, but it didn't take, of course. They gave him ticker tape parades, medals, and the keys to all the major cities. They warned him about the psychological dangers of being a survivor. They gave him case histories of other survivors—grim little anecdotes involving

suicide, insanity, and various mental aberrations.

And then they turned him loose.

For a while he enjoyed the fruits of victory. Whatever he wanted he could have for the asking. Girls flocked around him, men respected him, governments honored him, and a group of flunkies and hangers-on were willing enough to serve his every whim. He grew bored and returned to his home town.

It was not the same. He was not the same. When he walked down the streets, mothers would draw close to their daughters and hurry on past. If he shot pool, his old friends seemed aloof and played as if they were afraid to win. Only the shopkeepers were glad to see him come in, for whatever he took, the government paid for. If he were to shoot the mayor's son, the government would pay for that too. At home his own mother would look at him with that guarded look in her eyes, and his dad was careful not to look him in the eyes at all.

He spent a lot of time in his room. He was not lonely. He had learned to live alone. He was sitting in his room one evening when he saw Cassandra, the Martin's fifteen-year-old daughter, coming home with some neighborhood kid from the early movie. He watched idly as the boy tried to kiss her goodnight. There was an awkwardness between them that was vaguely exciting. At last the boy succeeded in kissing her on the cheek, and then, apparently satisfied, went on home.

He sat there for a long time lighting one cigarette from the last one. There was a conflict inside his mind that once would have been resolved differently and probably with no conscious thought. Making up his mind, he stubbed his cigarette and went downstairs. His mother and father were watching TV. They did not look up as he walked out the front door. They never did any more.

The Martins were still up. Mr. Martin was tying brightly colored flies for his new fly rod and Mrs. Martin was reading. They both stiffened when he entered without knocking —alarm playing over their faces like a flickering fire light. He didn't pause, but walked on up stairs without looking at them.

Mrs. Martin got to her feet and stood looking up the stairway without moving. In her eyes there was the look of a jungle tiger who watches its mate pinned to a stake at the bottom of the pit. Mr. Martin sat staring at the brightly colored flies on his lap. For a moment there was silence. Then a girl's shrill screams announced to the Martins that war's reality was also for the very young.

The surprise best seller of 1965 was Eric Berne's *Games People Play*. Of course, "game-playing" as a psychological model is anything but new. "Role-playing" has been a basic psychiatric concept for many

years, and Stephen Potter has played “Gamesmanship” into an enviable income for what seems almost as long.

What is comparatively new is the application of the mathematical Theory of Games to interpersonal behavior, in an effort to achieve a greater rigor and clarity in analysis and description. Last year’s *Annual* quoted some applications of the idea from an article by Timothy Leary in the book, *LSD* (Putnam, 1964), which were rather more sophisticated and far-reaching than anything offered by Dr. Berne. What Berne does provide Is a series of plot outlines of some of the most common and destructive behavior games, with catchy, colloquial titles (Kick Me, Let’s You and Him Fight, Rapo, etc.) to make them easier to think about and identify—and enable readers to enjoy the always popular mirror game. Who Am I?

I said “plot outlines” because, of course, game playing has been an underlying assumption of the writer, from bardic times. In s-f, the game—or, I should say. The Game—has had additional significance: Indeed, the puzzle-story is one of the most basic forms of the genre, and almost any “hard-core” science-fiction story is essentially a variant of a chess problem, in which specific pieces (characters) with clearly defined powers are located within an arbitrarily determined—but thereafter unchangeable—board (environment), with White (John Doe) to mate in so many moves (pages).

(John Brunner may well have brought this form to its ultimate formulation with his multilevel chess-plus novel last year—*The Squares of the City,* from Ballantine.)

In the last two stories, both Mrs. Saxton and Mr. Moudy made use of a variant of the popular “arena game” s-f story. I am intrigued not so much by the departures from the standard form they both effected, but by the marked similarity of structure in two stories on such dissimilar themes, from entirely dissimilar authors.

And yet the same—almost identical—arena was ideally suited to both stories. Now Fritz Leiber—a familiar name at last—makes use of a rather more complex arena, or labyrinth, to tell a more complex story of love-and-war.

* * * *

MOON DUEL
FRITZ LEIBER

First hint I had we'd been spotted by a crusoe was a little *tick* coming to my moonsuit from the miniradar Pete and I were gaily heaving into position near the east end of Gioja crater to scan for wrecks, trash, and nodules of raw metal.

Then came a *whish* which cut off the instant Pete's hand lost contact with the squat instrument. His gauntlet, silvery in the raw low polar sunlight, drew away very slowly, as if he'd grown faintly disgusted with our activity. My gaze kept on turning to see the whole shimmering back of his helmet blown off in a gorgeous sickening brain-fog and blood-mist that was already falling in the vacuum as fine red snow.

A loud *tock* then and glove-sting as the Crusoe's second slug hit the miniradar, but my gaze had gone back to the direction Pete had been facing when he bought it—in time to see the green needle-flash of the Crusoe's gun in a notch in Gioja's low wall, where the black of the shadowed rock met the gem-like starfields along a jagged border. I unslung my Swift [All-purpose vacuum rifle named for the .22 cartridge which as early as 1940 was being produced by Winchester, Remington, and Norma with factory loads giving it a muzzle velocity of 4,140 feet, almost a mile, a second.] as I dodged a long step to the side and squeezed off three shots. The first two shells must have traveled a touch too high, but the third made a beautiful fleeting violet globe at the base of the notch. It didn't show me a figure, whole or shattered, silvery or otherwise, on the wall or atop it, but then some crusoes are camouflaged like chameleons and most of them move very fast.

Pete's suit was still falling slowly and stiffly forward. Three dozen yards beyond was a wide black fissure, though exactly how wide I couldn't tell because much of the opposite lip merged into the shadow of the wall. I scooted toward it like a rat toward a hole. On my third step, I caught up Pete by his tool belt and oxy tube while his falling front was still inches away from the powdered pumice, and I heaved him along with me. Some slow or over-drilled part of my brain hadn't yet accepted he was dead.

Then I began to skim forward, inches above the ground myself, kicking back against rocky outcrops thrusting up through the dust—it was like fin-swimming. The crusoe couldn't have been expecting this nut stunt, by which I at least avoided the dreamy sitting-duck

slowness of safer, higher-bounding moon-running, for there was a green flash behind me and hurtled dust faintly pittered my soles and seat. He hadn't been leading his target enough. Also, I knew now he had shells as well as slugs.

I was diving over the lip three seconds after skoot-off when Pete's boot caught solidly against a last hooky outcrop. The something in my brain was still stubborn, for I clutched him like clamps, which made me swing around with a jerk. But even that was lucky, for a bright globe two yards through winked on five yards ahead like a mammoth firefly's flash, but not quite as gentle, for the invisible rarified explosion-front hit me hard enough to *boom* my suit and make the air inside slap me. Now I knew he had metal-proximity fuses on some of his shells too—they must be very good at mini-stuff on his home planet.

The tail of the pale green flash showed me the fissure's bottom a hundred yards straight below and all dust, as ninety percent of them are—pray God the dust was deep. I had time to thumb Extreme Emergency to the ship for it to relay automatically to Circumluna. Then the lip had cut me off from the ship and I had lazily fallen out of the glare into the blessed blackness, the dial lights in my helmet already snapped off—even they might make enough glow for the crusoe to aim by. The slug had switched off Pete's.

Ten, twelve seconds to fall and the opposite lip wasn't cutting off the notched crater wall. I could feel the Crusoe's gun trailing me down—he'd know moon-G, sticky old five-foot. I could feel his tentacle or finger or claw or ameboid bump tightening on the trigger or button or what. I shoved Pete away from me, parallel to the fissure wall, as hard as I could. Three more seconds, four, and my suit *boomed* again and I was walloped as another green flash showed me the smooth-sifted floor moving up and beginning to hurry a little. This flash was a hemisphere, not a globe—it had burst against the wall—but if there were any rock fragments they missed me. And it exactly bisected the straight line between me and Pete's silvery coffin. The crusoe knew his gun and his Luna—I really admired him, even if my shove had pushed Pete and me, action and reaction, just enough out of the target path. Then the fissure lip had cut the notch and I was readying to land like a three-legged crab, my Swift reslung, my free hand on my belted dust-shoes.

* * * *

Eleven seconds' fall on Luna is not much more than two on earth, but either are enough to build up a velocity of over fifty feet a second.

The dust jarred me hard, but thank God there were no reefs in it. It covered at least all the limbs and front of me, including my helmet-front—my dial lights, snapped on again, showed a grayness fine-grained as flour.

The stuff resisted like flour, too, as I unbelted my dust-shoes. Using them for a purchase, I pulled my other arm and helmet-front free. The stars looked good, even gray-dusted. With a hand on each shoe, I dragged out my legs and, balancing gingerly on the slithery stuff, got each of my feet snapped to a shoe. Then I raised up and switched on my headlight. I hated that. I no more wanted to do it than a hunted animal wants to break twigs or show itself on the skyline, but I knew I had exactly as long to find cover as it would take the crusoe to lope from the notch to the opposite lip of the fissure. Most of them lope very fast, they're that keen on killing.

Well, we started the killing, I reminded myself. *This time I'm the quarry.*

My searchlight made a perverse point of hitting Pete's shimmering casket, spread-eagled, seven-eighths submerged, like a man floating on his back. I swung the beam steadily. The opposite wall was smooth except for a few ledges and cracks and there wasn't any overhang to give a man below cover from someone on top.

But a section of the wall on my side, not fifty yards away, was hugely pocked with holes and half-bubbles where the primeval lava had foamed high and big against the feeble plucking of lunar gravity. I aimed myself at the center of that section and started out. I switched off my headlight and guided myself by the wide band of starfields.

You walk dust-shoes with much the same vertical lift and low methodical forward swing as snowshoes. It was nostalgic, but hunted animals have no time for memory-delicatessen.

Suddenly there was more and redder brightness overhead than the stars. A narrow ribbon of rock along the top of the opposite wall was glaringly bathed in orange, while the rim peaks beyond glowed faintly, like smoldering volcanoes. Light from the orange ribbon bounced down into my fissure, caroming back and forth between the walls until I could dimly see again the holes I was headed for.

The crusoe had popped our ship—both tanks, close together, so that the sun-warmed gasses, exploding out into each other, burned like a hundred torches. The oxyaniline lasted until I reached the holes. I crawled through the biggest. The fading glow dimly and fleetingly showed a rock-bubble twelve feet across with another hole at the back of it. The stuff looked black, felt rough yet diamond-hard. I risked a look behind me.

The ribbon glow was darkest red—the skeleton of our ship still aglow. The ribbon flashed green in the middle— a tiny venomous

dagger—and then a huge pale green firefly winked where Pete lay. He'd saved me a fourth time.

I had barely pushed sideways back when there was another of those winks just outside my hole, this one glaringly bright, its front walloping me. I heard through the rock faint *tings* of fragments of Pete's suit hitting the wall, but they may have been only residual ringings, from the nearer blast, in my suit or ears.

I scrambled through the back door in the bubble into a space which I made out by crawling to be a second bubble, resembling the first even to having a back door. I went through that third hole and turned around and rested my Swift's muzzle on the rough-scooped threshold. Since the crusoe lived around here, he'd know the territory better wherever I went. Why retreat farther and get lost? My dial lights showed that about a minute and a half had gone by since Pete bought it. Also, I wasn't losing pressure and I had oxy and heat for four hours—Circumluna would be able to deliver a rescue force in half that time, if my message had got through and if the crusoe didn't scupper them too. Then I got goosy again about the glow of the dial lights and snapped them off. I started to change position and was suddenly afraid the crusoe might already be trailing me by my transmitted sounds through the rock, and right away I held stock still and started to listen for *him*.

No light, no sound, a ghost-fingered gravity—it was like being tested for sanity-span in an anechoic chamber. Almost at once dizziness and the sensory mirages started to come, swimming in blue and burned and moaning from the peripheries of my senses—even waiting in ambush for a crusoe wouldn't stop them; I guess I wanted them to come. So though straining every sense against the Crusoe's approach, I had at last to start thinking about him.

It's strange that men should have looked at the moon for millennia and never guessed it was exactly what it looked like: a pale marble graveyard for living dead men, a Dry Tortuga of space where the silver ships from a million worlds marooned their mutineers, their recalcitrants, their criminals, their lunatics. Not on fertile warm-blanketed earth with its quaint adolescent race, which such beings might harm, but on the great silver rock of earth's satellite, to drag out their solitary furious lives, each with his suit and gun and lonely hut or hole, living by recycling his wastes; recycling, too, the bitter angers and hates and delusions which had brought him there. As many as a thousand of them, enough to mine the moon for meals and fuel-gases and to reconquer space and perhaps become masters of earth—had they chosen to cooperate. But their refusal to cooperate was the very thing for which they'd been marooned, and besides that they were of a half thousand different galactic breeds. And so

although they had some sort of electronic or psionic or what-not grapevine—at least what happened to one maroon became swiftly known to the others—each of them remained a solitary Friday-less Robinson Crusoe, hence the name.

I risked flashing my time dial. Only another thirty seconds gone. At this rate it would take an eternity for the two hours to pass before I could expect aid *if* my call had got through, while the crusoe— As my senses screwed themselves tighter to their task, my thoughts went whirling off again.

Earthmen shot down the first crusoe they met—in a moment of fumbling panic and against all their training. Ever since then the crusoes have shot first, or tried to, ignoring our belated efforts to communicate.

* * * *

I brooded for what I thought was a very short while about the age-old problem of a universal galactic code, yet when I flashed my time dial again, seventy minutes had gone somewhere.

That really froze me. He'd had time to stalk and kill me a dozen times—he'd had time to go home and fetch his dogs!—my senses couldn't be *that* good protection with my mind away. Why even now, straining them in my fear, all [got was my own personal static: I heard my heart pounding, my blood roaring, I think for a bit I heard the Brownian movement of the air molecules against my eardrums.

What I hadn't been doing, I told myself, was thinking about the crusoe in a systematic way.

He had a gun like mine and at least three sorts of ammo.

He'd made it from notch to fissure-lip in forty seconds or less—he must be a fast loper, whatever number feet; he might well have a jet unit.

And he'd shot at the miniradar ahead of me. Had he thought it a communicator?—a weapon?—*or some sort of robot as dangerous as a man . . . ?*

My heart had quieted, my ears had stopped roaring, and in that instant I heard through the rock the faintest *scratching.*

Scratch-scratch, scratch-scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch it went, each time a little louder.

I flipped on my searchlight and there coming toward me across die floor of the bubble outside mine was a silver spider as wide as a platter with four opalescent eyes and a green-banded body. Its hanging jaws were like inward-curving notched scissor blades.

I fired by automatism as I fell back. The spider's bubble was filled

with violet glare instantly followed by green. I was twice walloped by explosion-fronts and knocked down.

That hardly slowed me a second. The same flashes had shown me a hole in the top of my bubble and as soon as I'd scrambled to my feet I leaped toward it.

I did remember to leap gently. My right hand caught the black rim of the hole and it didn't break off and I drew myself up into the black bubble above. It had no hole in the top, but two high ones in the sides, and I went through the higher one.

I kept on that way. The great igneous bubbles were almost uniform. I always took the highest exit. Once I got inside a bubble with no exit and had to backtrack. After that I scanned first. I kept my searchlight on.

I'd gone through seven or seventeen bubbles before I could start to think about what had happened.

That spider had almost certainly not been my crusoe— or else there was a troop of them dragging a rifle like an artillery piece. And it hadn't likely been an hitherto-unknown, theoretically impossible, live vacuum-arthropod—or else the exotic biologists were in for a great surprise and I'd been right to wet my pants. No, it had most likely been a tracking or tracking-and-attack robot of some sort. Eight legs are a useful number, likewise eight hands. Were the jaws for cutting through suit armor? Maybe it was a robot pet for a lonely being. Here, Spid!

The second explosion? Either the crusoe had fired into the chamber from the other side, or else the spider had carried a bomb to explode when it touched me. Fine use to make of a pet! I giggled. I was relieved, I guess, to think it likely that the spider had been "only" a robot.

Just then—I was in the ninth or nineteenth bubble—the inside of my helmet misted over everywhere. I was panting and sweating and my dehumidifier had overloaded. It was as if I were in a real peasouper of a fog. I could barely make out the black loom of the wall behind me. I switched out my headlight. My time dial showed seventy-two minutes gone. I switched it off and then I did a queer thing.

I leaned back very carefully until as much of my suit as possible touched rock. Then I measuredly thumped the rock ten times with the butt of my Swift and held very still.

Starting with ten would mean we were using the decimal system. Of course there were other possibilities, but . . .

Very faintly, coming at the same rate as mine, I heard six thuds.

What constant started with six? If he'd started with three, I'd have given him one, and so on through a few more places of pi. Or if with

one, I'd have given him four—and then started to worry about the third and fourth places in the square root of two. I might take his signal for the beginning of a series with the interval of minus four and rap him back two, but then how could he rap me minus two? Oh why hadn't I simply started rapping out primes? Of course all the integers, in fact all the real numbers, from thirty-seven through forty-one had square roots beginning with six, but which one ... ?

Suddenly I heard a scratching...

* * * *

My searchbeam was on again, my helmet had unmisted, my present bubble was empty.

Just the same I scuttled out of it, still trending upward where I could. But now the holes wouldn't trend that way. They kept going two down for one up and the lines of bubbles zigzagged. I wanted to go back, but then I might hear the scratching. Once the bubbles started getting smaller. It was like being in solid black suds. I lost any sense of direction. I began to lose the sense of up-down. What's moon-gravity to the numbness of psychosis? I kept my searchlight on although I was sure the glow it made must reach ten bubbles away. I looked all around every bubble before I entered it, especially the overhang just above the entry hole.

Every once in a while I would hear somebody saying Six! Six? Six! like that and then very rapidly seven-eight-nine-five-four-three-two-one-naught. How would you rap naught in the decimal system? That one I finally solved: you'd rap ten.

Finally I came into a bubble that had a side-hole four feet across and edged at the top with diamonds. Very fancy. Was this the Spider Princess' boudoir? There was also a top hole but I didn't bother with that—it had no decor. I switched off my searchlight and looked out the window without exposing my head. The diamonds were stars. After a bit I made out what I took to be the opposite lip of the fissure I'd first dove in, only about one hundred feet above me. The rim-wall beyond looked vaguely familiar, though I wasn't sure about the notch. My time dial said one hundred eighteen minutes gone as I switched it off. Almost time to start hoping for rescue. Oh great!—with their ship a sitting duck for the crusoe they wouldn't be expecting. I hadn't signaled a word besides Extreme Emergency.

I moved forward and sat in the window, one leg outside, my Swift under my left arm. I plucked a flash grenade set for five seconds from my belt, pulled the fuse and tossed it across the fissure, almost hard enough to reach the opposite wall.

I looked down, my Swift swinging like my gaze.

The fissure lit up like a boulevard. Across from me I knew the flare was dropping dreamily, but I wasn't looking that way. Right below me, two hundred feet down, I saw a transparent helmet with something green and round and crested inside and with shoulders under it.

Just then I heard the *scratching* again, quite close.

I fired at once. My shell made a violet burst and raised a fountain of dust twenty feet from the crusoe. I scrambled back into my bubble, switching on my searchlight. Another spider was coming in on the opposite side, its legs moving fast. I jumped for the top-hole and grabbed its rim with my free hand. I'd have dropped my Swift if I'd needed my other hand, but I didn't. As I pulled myself up and through, I looked down and saw the spider straight below me eyeing me with its uptilted opalescent eyes and doubling its silver legs. Then it straightened its legs and sprang up toward me, not very fast but enough against Luna's feeble gravitational tug to put it into this upper room with me. I knew it mustn't touch me and I mustn't touch it by batting at it. I had started to shift the explosive shell in my gun for a slug, and its green-banded body was growing larger, when there was a green blast in the window below and its explosion-front, *booming* my suit a little, knocked the spider aside and out of sight before it made it through the trap door of my new bubble. Yet the spider didn't explode, if that was what had happened to the first one; at any rate there was no second green flash.

My new bubble had a top hole too and I went through it the same way I had the last. The next five bubbles were just the same too. I told myself that my routine was getting to be like that of a circus acrobat—except who stages shows inside black solidity?—except the gods maybe with the dreams they send us. The lava should be transparent, so the rim-wall peaks could admire.

At the same time I was thinking how if the biped humanoid shape is a good one for medium-size creatures on any planet, why so the spider shape is a good one for tiny creatures and apt to turn up anywhere and be copied in robots too.

The top hole in the sixth bubble showed me the stars, while one half of its rim shone white with sunlight.

Panting, I lay back against the rock. I switched off my searchlight. I didn't hear any scratching.

The stars. The stars were energy. They filled the universe with light, except for hidey holes and shadows here and there.

Then the number came to me. With the butt of my Swift I rapped out five. No answer. No scratching either. I rapped out five again.

Then the answer came, ever so faintly. Five knocked back at me.

Six five five—Planck's Constant, the invariant quantum of energy. Oh, it should be to the minus 29th power, of course, but I couldn't think how to rap that and, besides, the basic integers were all that mattered.

I heard the *scratching* . . .

I sprang and caught the rim and lifted myself into the glaring sunlight . . . and stopped with my body midway.

Facing me a hundred feet away, midway through another top-hole—he must have come very swiftly by another branch of the bubble ladder—he'd know the swiftest ones—was my green-crested crusoe. His face had a third eye where a man's nose would be, which with his crest made him look like a creature of mythology. We were holding our guns vertically.

We looked like two of the damned, half out of their holes in the floor of Dante's hell.

I climbed very slowly out of my hole, still pointing my gun toward the zenith. So did he.

We held very still for a moment. Then with his gun butt he rapped out ten. I could both see and also hear it through the rock.

I rapped out three. Then, as if the black bubble-world were one level of existence and this another, I wondered why we were going through this rigamarole. We each knew the other had a suit and a gun (and a lonely hole?) and so we knew we were both intelligent and knew math. So why was our rapping so precious?

He raised his gun—I think to rap out one, to start off pi.

But I'll never be sure, for just then there were two violet bursts, close together, against the fissure wall, quite close to him.

He started to swing the muzzle of his gun toward me. At least I think he did. He must know violet was the color of my explosions. I know I thought someone on my side was shooting. And I must have thought he was going to shoot me—because a violet dagger leaped from my Swift's muzzle and I felt its sharp recoil and then there was a violet globe where he was standing and moments later some fragment *twinged* lightly against my chest—a playful ironic tap.

He was blown apart pretty thoroughly, all his constants scattered, including—I'm sure—Planck's.

* * * *

It was another half hour before the rescue ship from Circumluna landed. I spent it looking at earth low on the horizon and watching around for the spider, but I never saw it. The rescue party never found it either, though they made quite a hunt—with me helping after I'd

rested a bit and had my batteries and oxy replenished. Either its power went off when its master died, or it was set to "freeze" then, or most likely go into a "hide" behavior pattern. Likely it's still out there waiting for an incautious earthman, like a rattlesnake in the desert or an old, forgotten land mine.

I also figured out, while waiting in Gioja crater, there near the north pole on the edge of Shackleton crater, the only explanation I've ever been able to make, though it's something of a whopper, of the two violet flashes which ended my little mathematical friendship-chant with the crusoe. They were the first two shells I squeezed off at him— the ones that skimmed the notch. They had the velocity to orbit Luna, and the time they took—two hours and five minutes—was right enough.

Oh, the consequences of our past actions!

Fritz Leiber is the original S-F man. By which I mean any number of things, beginning with his beginning in the field a good thirty years ago (which would make him Senior Writer for the volume if it were not for Alfred Jarry antedating *everybody.)* Nor is it simply seniority, but also scope. Leiber began as a Lovecraft disciple, went from fantasy for *Unknown,* to s-f for *Astounding,* and then to popular-science writing and editing. In Leiber's case, S is not just for Science, or Satire, or Speculation, though they are all there, but for Snakes as well as Spiders (the Time-Change stories), and for Shakespeare ("Four Ghosts in Hamlet" in last year's FSSF), and Sword-and-Sorcery. (F, of course, is for Fafhrd and the Mouser.) And this year he has expanded his *range* a bit more, by writing the first authorized post-Burroughs Tarzan book *(Tarzan and the Valley of Gold,* Ballantine, 1966).

What started me on all this, really, was snakes. Looking through the odds and ends set aside for these notes, I found an undated news item which I had clipped and never mailed, headlined: SNAKES, TOOLS OF WAR, STILL IN DEMAND DESPITE YEMEN TRUCE. Seems you can always tell when fighting will break out down there by following the dips and rises in snake stocks. The snakes are neither weapons nor "native superstition." They are kept as pets by desert fighters because they are the most reliable and effective eye-wipers in a sandstorm: A *guerilla with sand in his eye grabs his pet serpent firmly and inserts its twitching tail into the corner of his eye to remove the source of irritation.*

They tried goggles, but the goggles cracked and clouded in the desert storms. Snakes die in captivity—but they are plentiful. Snakes are *available* in the desert—and apparently the Arabs do not share our (Western) "instinctive" prejudice against snakes.

Which brings us to the twin questions posed in the next "arena" variant: How many of our instincts are cultural products? How many

of our limitations are cultural prejudices? Or, if you take everything away from a man except the faculties contained inside his skin, what has he got going for him that is still *available?*

I warn you beforehand, this is not the kind of story I usually publish—not the kind anyone *usually* publishes, it would seem. The author says he collected 113 rejection slips, over thirteen years, before it sold—not, as one might have expected, to an adventure magazine, but to *The Colorado Quarterly*.

That was where Larry Ashmead, Doubleday's new s-f editor, saw it. Ashmead sent me a copy. Both of us wrote to Malec, asking what else he had done.

It seems this was his first published story, but he had lots more that hadn't sold. And I know why: Malec does everything wrong—only it comes out right.

There is a Jack London kind of Tightness to his wrongness.

You probably won't like it—right away. (And then you find it doesn't go *away.)*

Anyhow, here is the first one; Doubleday will publish a collection, *Extrapolus*, in the spring.

* * * *

PROJECT INHUMANE
ALEXANDER B. MALEC

Biev wasn't exactly made into a laughing stock. The ones in power, the Directorates of Financing, weren't quite sure whether to limit his funds altogether on the experiment in question, therefore killing any future efforts, or to extend to him the fiat of a blank check, or simply to liquidate him, his associates, and the whole endeavor on the contention that the project was mad, fruitless, pointless, undecipherable, a waste of the People's money, and ... a mite dangerous to all.

Said the Prime Factor on the Directorate of Financing, "It would appear that Friend Biev has a tiger by the tail."

Biev was the kind of person that in a Western society would be termed a screwball and doomed to menial garbage-emptying and ditchdigging chores, since he didn't conform to the proper behavior-personality-interest pattern of an overlaid, rectangular-hole-punched pasteboard computer card. Instead, Biev was in a society where his kind were looked upon as crude ore to be assayed and appreciated. A tongue-in-cheek appreciation, it was true, but appreciation nonetheless, with a bit of eyebrow-raising and tongue-wagging as kind of a price to pay for being unorthodox. And more than just different, he was the epitome of the Different. Persons less individual than Biev cast envious eyes upon him—where in a Western society they threw stones—and thanked their gods that they didn't have to be like him since the world already had a Biev. If homage was in the coin of envy, you might say Biev was the Unorthodox's Unorthodox.

The education of Biev had been a tossed salad of unrelated subjects, from Sanskrit to what's the bee really saying when it buzzes, from refractory properties of the Ionosphere in January to the PSI pressure in Mindanao Deep. All these having the sole commonality of being contained in the cranium of one Pierre Biev, scientist.

How Biev climbed up the technological hierarchy was by methods as random as the subjects he had studied. A piece of work published in *Pro-Scientific,* a bit of hornblowing here, a bit of pushing there, a child's tantrum now and then when he didn't get his way, and a bit of fawning and flattering of superiors—the latter method, while useful to his move upward, also showed chinks in his personality, the very human happenstance of a shoddy character trait or two. He was something of a salesman too, a one-track salesman, who managed to make his point of view prevail over the doubts and resistance of those

who held the purse strings. Little could these exchequers be blamed, however, for their stone-hard reluctance being transmuted into semi-rotten squash before the freshness of approach, the originality of the man, which left them agog.

So he got his money, his work sites, and personnel.

And he succeeded. Not often; more like one out of five tries in any given project, which in scientific circles is a batting average close to astonishing.

It was enough to assure him of a larger allocation of money, more technicians at his disposal, of a say in the exclusive Presidium Scientific.

Biev couldn't say how many projects he was at any instant conducting. Some were in the idea stage, some in seminar discussion, some already in fund endowment, and the early data of some were even now being correlated by computer. At any time he was immersed in at least six projects in full swing, and at any time projects were being phased out due to utter failure; some were phased out prior to a wait-and-see unsureness of results, and there were the hang-fire ones that couldn't as yet be labeled anything and that awaited some new light cast upon them either through independent inspiration or a new approach to appraisal of their data.

So Biev was busy. And happy, too. That is, until Project SC 109A PB exploded and fragmented the whole of his scientific circle into a round of arguing, philosophizing, and what have you. SC 109A PB, incidentally, stood for Scientific, the 109th such try, the first change or addition to that try (A), and the Projecteer's initials—Biev's own conceit and insistence.

For scientists argue. They love to argue. The meat and gist of any question scientific is just a plain lot of discourse, a good chunk of disagreement, some quarreling, and maybe even a clipboard thrown in a rage. This is the method. And they argued anywhere; at lunch, in the corridors, even in the men's room. Time was, some recalcitrant—Biev's opinion—wrote a chemical formula of impossible structure on the bathroom mirror in soap. In turn, Biev wrote his own notation below, also in soap, which said in effect: go refer to your high school chemistry primer. A little later that day, that same formula was reproduced at the tail-end of a string of equations proving that that same formula could indeed occur. The author even took the trouble to mark down some bibliography. After some looking through this bibliography in the local library, Biev made his way back to the men's-room mirror and wrote—in small print—congratulations!

They argued anytime, over almost anything, even unrelated topics, which included one time a preposterous discourse from an impish biochemist named Gargarin that beer was conceivably better

than milk for children. What's more, the others believed it

Among some forty technicians, engineers, and scientists who were in Biev's domain was a running argument about each one's pet topic, and, depending upon what chance combination brought who together, wills and opinions would clash constantly.

In this manner they kept their mental faculties honed down fine, though privately Biev had to admit he had a headache sometimes at the end of the day.

They argued anywhere, as was happening right now, near the conclusion of Project SC 109A PB.

"The wonderful adaptability of a human being," said Biev and held up the hand-woven shirt.

"Yes, but the subject died," said Gargarin.

"How's that?"

"I said, 'Yes, but the subject died.'"

"Oh."

"Why don't you leave your hood down so you can hear me?"

"I don't like the cold."

Gargarin gave him an odd look and looked down. "Neither did he."

"He was adapting though, wasn't he? Ahh, what do you think got him?"

"Cold probably. Though if he had better leaves or more head hair, he might've wove himself a better shirt." Biev didn't answer. "Or more food. You could have left him more food." Gargarin said this with censure, not being as professionally detached as his superior.

"Ahh," said Biev with a sneer, "more food. Then what do we learn? When a man survives what do we learn? It's when he almost makes it that we learn; we learn the uttermost limits of his adaptability."

"The cold," said Gargarin. "He couldn't find enough protein to keep his metabolism going. All the bugs and insects go into hiding when it gets cold."

"This we know," said Biev. "But look here . . . and here. His system learned to metabolize cellulose. See there. He was living on grass, too."

"The other ones died."

"Yes, the other ones died," said Biev with some vigor and in cadence to his stomping feet, "but do you know why they died, do you know why? Here we placed them out under ideal conditions, in the spring of the year, and they died quickly. In less than a month. All of them. This one went admirably well." He was staring down with professional detachment at the smooth sculptured features of a frozen man.

“What I told you at the beginning,” said Gargarin. He had the little eyes and ruddy complexion of the prairie tribes. “We should have given them some indoctrination.”

Biev waved the thought away, “As I told you at the beginning, he would have survived longer. We first seek out the limits of a common, ordinary man. Then we build our army, our shock troops. There’s a frontier here,” his eyes shone, “a frontier that’s just beginning to be explored.”

Gargarin felt a little exercise would go good now, so he said before Biev got himself wound up, “We still have one more man.”

They strode off across the sparse, rocky landscape, scuffing the tufts of grass showing through the snow.

Biev continued with his monologue, as he had to continue with his monologue; not even a river to swim across would have interfered with his monologue; such matter lay coiled and ready in his brain, every dot and comma in place, only waiting to be reeled out. “Man is lazy. He does only what is required of him, not much more. What I mean is guilt, fear, love, honor, what have you, are the drives that get him off his dead behind. Every one of us, if we dared, would do nothing but sleep and drink all day. But we don’t; we produce the minimum that we or our society sets for us. It’s a rare one that drives himself past that minimum.

“So we wonder, what would a man do if he were forced to drive himself further, I mean to the ultimate limit of his physical endurance and the limit of his mental capacity.

“What do we do: We put him out in the field, no food, no water, no shelter. Nothing. We first, of course, allow ourselves the requisite of an intelligent being so incarcerated. Hell, you wouldn’t use an animal and you wouldn’t use a moron. You use an intelligent man, not necessarily college-trained but commonsensical and the like.

“Animals do not thrive in alien environments. Some refuse to eat in captivity, some refuse to breed. Some simply die from the sheer despair of being confined. But man, ah, man. So much has history proven about man. He is almost universally adaptable to any bad environment. He adjusts well.

“Now thrust him into an environment hitherto intolerable to him, and he will find himself embracing one of three alternatives. He can escape. He can accept his lot and do his best to survive. Or, he can die. In our experiment one of the three alternatives allowed the subject was eliminated: escape was made impossible.

“And what do we learn? Ah, what do we learn. Already so much do we learn. So much. Ah, Pavlov, if he only knew what he began.”

“Pavlov!” said Gargarin. He said it as an oath.

“Already we know the thought processes by which man can cut

out the unpleasantness of reality and paint a rosy glow to his world."

"Could use some of that rosy glow about now," said Gargarin, a little out of breath in the poor footing in going up the hill. "A half kilo would do."

Biev went on as if the other hadn't spoken. "And parapsychology. Ah, the fields of parapsychology. Did you know that two of them, two of them, students—" Biev was in the habit of lecturing—"were able by sheer mind power to bring crows down to within a stone's throw, within the radius of the chain? What would Rhine have thought, what would he have said?"

"Rhine," said Gargarin, who was proud, haughty, and kowtowed to no one, "is a cardsharp charlatan."

"These two," continued Biev, "were able to bring crows down because they wanted to bring those crows down, because they wanted to so badly, because they wanted to so very badly. Because their very survival depended upon it."

"We're almost there," said Gargarin. He meant the top of the hill.

"Some beings are able, by sheer will, to bring a victual animal within their jaws, whereas man is lazy; he'd earn his bread by his back rather than think for a few minutes a day. Imagine then, if man, superior man, were thus forced to survive? What could he do? What could he do above and beyond the animals? It would be ... it would be just . . . just fantastic! Already we've learned so much .. . and maybe we'll learn more."

Gargarin pointed over the crest of the hill. "If he's still alive, you mean."

"We'll still learn," said Biev. Gargarin knew from the direct reply that the other had left the lecture hall and was in the here-now, puffing up a hill with him through the ankle-deep snow.

They were now at the top of the hill, looking at the clearing below. Instead of a wide arc of tramped down snow that had been expected there was just a white, virtually undisturbed blanket.

"Oh, no," said Biev in a disappointment that excluded any trace of humane pity. "Oh, no. He died."

"Let's get closer." They walked down the hill. And stopped. "He didn't die," said Gargarin, and they walked to the chain.

Biev's jaw almost dropped, he was that surprised.

"No, I guess he didn't die," continued Gargarin, and he kicked at the chain. "Guess your man had three alternatives after all." He said this last in a chaffing tone.

Biev squatted down in the snow and scrutinized the chain. "The shackle...it's not cut!"

Gargarin had a look too. "Sometimes an animal would prefer disfigurement. As would a man."

“But there’s no blood.”

“And no foot.”

The men stood up and looked at one another. Biev was stunned; first, by the fact of the escape and, then, by some other thing not yet shaped in his consciousness.

Gargarin began by bringing the something to the forefront. “Not counting ours, there’s only two sets of tracks.”

Biev made a definite count of the fact and nodded, “He must’ve returned and left.”

“You mean,” answered Gargarin, “he must’ve left and returned!” Biev’s eye caught him the instant the other realized the illogic of his statement.

“Do you see it?” Biev asked.

“Yes.”

“If he escaped and didn’t return—one set of tracks.” Gargarin regarded him with the clear animal eyes of the prairie tribes. “If he escaped, returned, and left again...”

“Three sets of tracks.”

“If he escaped,” continued Biev, “returned, and we caught him just then. . . .”

“Two sets of tracks. But we didn’t catch him, did we?”

Biev ignored the other’s statement. “If there was no one here, ever, then a being could have made the tracks to the site and left. Only if there never had been a prisoner here.” Gargarin didn’t have to answer. “But,” said Biev, as if further trying to confirm fact, “we know he was here. In these four theorems of logic, none can apply. Do you see that, Gargarin, none can apply!”

Gargarin nodded, pursed his lips in thought, and said, “What you are looking for, my dear Biev, is a prisoner *here* with an even number of tracks. Or ... a prisoner gone . . . with an odd number of tracks.”

Biev looked like he could use a double shot of something, or maybe the whole bottle for that matter.

A red sun shone a scant hairline above this dreary, bleak scene. A crow called en route to its night bivouac. A faint wind stirred the black locks of one biochemist Gargarin. “We’d better get back to the vehicle,” he said.

Biev only contemplated the point where the two sets of tracks intersected.

“I said, we’d better get back to the vehicle.”

Biev didn’t look up. Gargarin knew the other to be a man of the sole thought, meaning he didn’t hear him. Then Gargarin saw it too. “What is this?” And he picked it up. It was a small flaxen bag of peasant manufacture, easily fitting into the palm of the man’s hand. He took a sampling from the bag. “Seeds of some sort.”

“Must’ve been the reason he returned,” said Biev. “Ah, returned and left,” he corrected himself, still disconcerted over the wrong number of tracks.

Biev, always the boldest of men, took one of the seeds, sniffed at it. Then he bit it in two. And made a face.

“Allow me,” said Gargarin and also bit one in two. He also made a face. “Oh, I know what these are. Our escapee is a bit of a wit, a clown. Came back to show us he could come back.”

“But why seeds?”

“I don’t know,” said Gargarin. “Some symbolic meaning, maybe.”

“Maybe someone back there can tell us. Or maybe something in Western literature.”

“Western literature?”

“The man here, the escapee who caused to happen the wrong number of tracks, was a strong reader of Western literature. Not only a strong reader—that didn’t satisfy him—he was also a strong proponent of Western literature. And Western ways. But that wasn’t enough for him. We here are tolerant enough to allow a man to believe what he will, but that wasn’t freedom enough for him. He had to go around and expound his feelings. He went around preaching his views . . . and soon he had a lot of others cackling the same bosh. The thing got out of hand, and the man who wasn’t content to leave well enough alone became a political prisoner.” Biev cleared his throat. “He was a farmer, and talkative farmers are of no use to anybody. A good reason among others that he was chosen for this project. Does this, ah, does this anticipate your question?”

Gargarin nodded. “Let’s get back.”

Biev didn’t move. He had one more question. “Wonder how he got away?”

“It’s obvious.”

“Good god, man. You aren’t saying he disappeared from that chain.”

Gargarin shrugged. “Two tracks. No prisoner. The logic of it. . .”

“Nonsense!” Biev yelled. “Sheepdip and nonsense. There must be an explanation. There must always be an explanation.”

“We’ll ask around when we get back. Let us go. It is getting cold.”

Biev and the biochemist started back up the hill.

“Ask about what?” said Biev.

“Those seeds. They have a meaning, a symbolic meaning. They’ll explain the whole question. I’m sure of it.”

Biev was the kind of person that should never play poker; his face the kind that showed what he was thinking. This time he showed doubt. “This I’ve got to see. This I really have got to see. The connection between a man’s impossible escape . . .” he looked at the

broken grain in his hand "... and a grain of mustard seed."

Mr. Malec says the idea for "Project Inhumane" came out of eight years as a chemical-lab technician, and that the story itself was *conceived while pushing* stones out of a *railroad car in weather* 8 de*grees* above *zero,* working as a laborer for the N. Y. Central.

"Those Who Can, Do"—another "first"—also had its origins on the job: *A student once challenged* me *during my lecture, "What's this stuff good for anyway?"* [Kurosaka teaches mathematics at a small Boston college.] *Months later, I indulged in* an *l-should-have-said daydream. By the time I was through, I had a fantasy on my hands.*

About himself, he adds: *I keep myself surrounded by remnants of yet-unfulfilled dreams:* an *electric bass, a surrealistic chess set, hundreds of toys and puzzles, a trombone, a pair of dumbbells, a baritone saxophone, and a box of manuscript envelopes. I also enjoy joggling, performing magic tricks, listening to my hundreds of LP's, and working crossword puzzles.* [Some people's days have more hours than others'—as you will see a bit further on. j.m.] *I have often been advised to learn a trade in order to get my mind off my hobbies.*

* * * *

THOSE WHO CAN, DO
BOB KUROSAKA

The semester began in its traditionally chaotic manner. Class cards were lost; students wandered aimlessly through the lecture hall. An occasional *oh* punctuated my lecture, followed by the fumbling exit of a blushing student, suddenly realizing the course is Differential Equations, not Introduction to Philosophy.

After announcing the required texts and papers, I asked the usual "Are there any questions?" If there were none, I could catch the 11:20 bus to Weavertown; there would be time for a short round of golf.

A student rose and jammed his hands into his back pockets. "Professor, why do we have to take this course?"

An uneasy murmur rose from the class, a nervous shuffling of feet.

"What is your name, young man?" I asked.

"Barone, sir. Frank Barone."

"Well, Mr. Barone, the University requires that all those majoring in Mathematics complete a minimum of . . ."

"I know that!" he interrupted, then added quickly, "sir."

I smiled and nodded.

"I mean," he continued, "is there any practical use in studying totally abstract concepts? What I need is a guide to being a contributing member of society."

I concluded that he was a refugee from Philosophy, but his deep voice and confident manner had enchanted the class. The other students were awaiting my answer. I cleared my throat.

"Mr. Barone," I began, "what do you want from the University?"

"I'm not sure, sir. I thought two years of college would help me decide on a career, but it hasn't. You see, *I don't have to work for a living."*

He said it as simply as you or I would say, "I'm having trouble with my teeth."

"And how will you obtain the essentials of life, Mr. Barone?"

"Well, sir, I have a ... a gift."

"Indeed," I chuckled. "The Midas Touch, perhaps?"

I immediately regretted my sarcasm. Barone's face turned red. He had confessed a matter of great personal importance and I had ridiculed him.

"Better than that, professor!" he called. "Watch!"

Barone raised a hand and pointed at me. My lectern rose silently

and hovered above my head. I heard a gasp. I turned in time to see Barone gesturing at a shapely coed. She was trying to cover her nakedness with her notebook.

"Mr. Barone!" I shouted. "That will be enough!"

"Not yet, professor!"

He waved and clutched as if catching a butterfly. When he opened his hands, a swarm of bats flew out, careening wildly about the lecture hall. Coeds screamed and dove under their chairs.

Barone had to be stopped. I took a deep breath and shouted, *"Stop!"*

The room hushed suddenly; everyone froze. Only the whispering flight of the bats and the naked girl's whimpering broke the heavy silence. All eyes were on me, even Barone's. This had to be good.

I pointed at the lectern and brought it down gently. A quick gesture returned the girl's clothes.

I clasped my hands together and concentrated. I opened them and released the falcons. They swept the air clean of bats and returned to my hand, obediently vanishing.

The class was a single open mouth. It was time to break the tension.

"Are there any other questions?"

The students shook their heads numbly. Only Barone remained motionless.

"Very well. Read page three through seventeen for next time. Do all problems on page seventeen. That will be all for today."

The class filed out quietly. Barone, the last to leave, hesitated by the rear doors of the lecture hall. He turned and looked back. We studied each other for several seconds. Then, as if making a decision, he nodded grimly. He flashed me a smile and walked out humming.

I let out my breath and gathered my notes. As I left the lecture hall, I glanced at my watch. 11:30.

Maybe I can catch the 1:15 bus.

ESP stories, which had (comparatively) disappeared from the magazines for two or three years—perhaps in reaction against the played-out "psionics," or mechanized-ESP, fad of the preceding years —seem to be edging back in again. One of the most promising of 1965's first novels was Phyllis Gotlieb's *Sunburst* (Gold Medal), a thoughtful and effective book about a group of mutation-affected children in a midwestern town. And a bright new first story in *If,* "Simon Says," by Lawrence S. Todd, is pure—if funny— psionics.

But most of the new stories are a bit different: more exploratory than assertive, more concerned with the familiar individual borderline possibilities than with the superman problems implicit in the sudden

emergence of clearly delineated “powers,” they tend to avoid the tags (ESP, psi, telepathy, telekinesis, etc.) as well as the specific patterns of perception defined by the old labels. John Phillifent’s “Finnegan’s Knack” (Analog) is about a “hunchy” man. Hal Moore’s extraordinary first story, “Sea Bright” (to be included in the F&SF “Best”), contains a child who might be a sister to Alistair Bevan’s “Susan” (coming up next), from the British magazine Science *fantasy*.

Last year I reported here that Ted Cornell, longtime editor of New Worlds and Science *Fantasy,* had retired from the job. The magazines were taken over by the publishers of Compact Books (Roberts & Vinter, London); Michael Moorcock became editor of New *Worlds,* and *Science Fantasy* came under the editorship of a man every bit as romantic and rococo as his name: Kyril Bonfiglioli.

Bon (or Bonfig, to his more energetic friends) lives in a Victorian mansion in Oxford, furnished largely with *objets d’art* en route from their former homes to his art gallery and curio shop. (When I was there, much of the furnishing consisted of—or was hidden by—endless glass cases of stuffed birds—large ones.) Proprietor of a flourishing Oxford bookshop, as well as the Bonfiglioli Art Gallery, Bon is a lecturer on medieval art for the University, an occasional writer, dilettante of all the arts, and way-back science-fiction fan. A Balliol College man with an incredible—but oddly pleasant— toff accent, he drives a Rolls, complete with automatic record player.

In a year and a half of Bon’s erratic but intense guidance the magazine has changed its character to the point where it has now also changed its name: As of March, 1966, it became *Impulse.* In the less than two years between the changes, at least a dozen writers worthy of notice made their debut in its pages. Four of them are represented in this *Annual;* also notable in 1965 were Ernest Hill (particularly “Joik”), Roger Jones (“The Island,” a first story), Pamela Adams, Patricia Hocknell, Pippin Graham, and B. N. Ball.

Keith Roberts, Bonfiglioli’s big discovery the previous year (and probably the most notable of all the very new British writers, so far), is now assistant editor of *Impulse.*

All I know about Alistair Bevan is that he is a young man in his early thirties, and a “professional and commercial artist by trade”—which makes it seem somehow unfair that he should also have written four stories I considered at least briefly for inclusion here—one of which, “The Madman,” almost edged “Susan” out.

* * * *

SUSAN
ALISTAIR BEVAN

Summer and winter the chemmy lab had a smell all its own, a sharp half-sweet nuance like the scent of dust magnified many times. It came from the storage shelves to the left of the door where bottles of chemicals stood in rows on shelves of dark orange wood. Here were sulphates and thiosulphates, oxides and hydroxides, phosphorus coiled like Devil's spaghetti in its thick oil, shining miniature slagheaps of iodine. There were other things too, a microscope on loan from Biology next door, a balance, its brasswork shining butter-yellow from its protective case; and a crystal of $CuSO_4$, meridian-bright in its tall vat. The jar in which the crystal hung stood on top of the highest shelf and seemed in itself to be a focus of light; reflections burned deep inside it like elongated turquoise suns.

Susan moved her unusual eyes from the shelves of chemicals, back to Mrs. Williams. The science mistress droned on softly, voice pitched just loud enough to carry to the farthest corners of the lab. From time to time chalk rasped on the board, the lines of symbols grew, white dust fell silently to thicken the drifts along the bottom of the varnished frame. This was the last period of the day and the lights were burning, pooling the floor with yellow, defining the edges of the benches with long waxy reflections, striking spindle-shaped gleams from the rims of beakers and flasks. Through the windows the sky was deepening toward four o'clock blue. Little noises came from the thirty girls; the rasp of a stool leg, the scuff of a foot, an occasional cough. The class was very slightly restless. Autumn term would finish in just under a fortnight; eight whole schooldays and a bit before breaking-up and all the concert-making, report-sealing, desk-tidying excitement still to come. Christmas was already in the air.

The benches ran round three sides of the lab. To the right were more shelves with masses of glassware, testtubes, gas jars, troughs, great seldom-used retorts. In the corner behind was the fume cupboard, bulky and forbidding with its tall newel posts, in the middle of the room the dais and the long blackboards. Susan sat halfway down the center bench, elbows resting on the dark wood, knees together, steepled fingers just touching her top lip. She let her eyes wander again from the face of the mistress to the batswing burner on the bench in front of her. The little flame danced in a deepening web of shadow, its base invisible, its yellow horns quivering and ducking and never quite repeating the same shape twice. Its other less-used

name was butterfly burner, and like the Olympic torch it was a symbol, lit at the beginning of a lesson, never extinguished until the end. The flame hovered at the tip of the slim pipe like the bleeder of a tiny furnace where ideas, perhaps, were burned.

Mrs. Williams raised her chin slightly, questioningly. “And the composition of hydrochloric acid, someone? Quickly now.” Her glance traveled across the rows of faces, came inevitably to Susan. “Yes, Susan?” she asked.

The girl lowered her hands to her lap gently and straightened her back. If a voice can be said to have color, Susan’s voice was amber like her hair. “Thank you, Susan,” said Mrs. Williams. “Yes.” She paused, right elbow cupped in left hand, finger touching her throat. She was still for a moment, looking at nothing. Then the duster fizzed softly on the blackboard, the chalk scraped again. The lesson continued.

Ten to four, and the class starting to make their notes. Susan wrote methodically, glancing up from time to time to verify a formula that was already in her mind. As she finished the last line the bell shrilled in the corridor.

Nibs continued to scratch for another half minute; Mrs. Williams ran a very firm class. Then the mistress nodded briefly; exercise books scurried into satchels, buckles snapped shut, fountain pens were closed and rammed back into blazer pockets. There was the sort of straining silence that only comes between last bell and dismissal. Mrs. Williams eagled at the girls, compressed her lips. Then she turned and scanned the board with a vaguely resentful air, as if the end of classes had taken her completely by surprise. The corners of Susan’s mouth turned upward the smallest fraction. This was all part of the ritual.

“Very well,” said Mrs. Williams. “Stand.”

A thunder of obedience.

“Stools.”

The stools were thrust hastily beneath the benches.

“Dismiss,” said Mrs. Williams. “Quietly now.”

The class scuttered down the corridor. Susan watched them go. Through the open door came the hurrying, locker-slamming sound of the big school finishing for the day. The batswing flame vanished with a pop.

Mrs. Williams looked up sharply. “Well, Susan? Haven’t we got a home?”

Susan swung her crammed satchel onto her shoulder. “I’m sorry, Mrs. Williams. I was dreaming.”

Mrs. Williams smiled. The smile looked a little strained. “Time enough for that after next June.”

“Yes, Mrs. Williams. Good night.”

"Good night, Susan."

The mistress stood in the doorway, books under her arm, hand on the lightswitches. She watched Susan walk away. She stayed still after the tall girl had turned the corner and was out of sight. Then a scuffle of second-formers shot from somewhere, swirled momentarily round her skirt. Mrs. Williams jerked to automatic attention. "You. You, there. Yes, all of you. Come here . . ." She turned off the switches, and left the classroom to the twilight.

Susan washed her hands and face in the end sink of the first-floor cloakroom, pulled a fresh loop of towel out of the dispenser. She dried herself slowly, burying her face in the towel to catch the clean, linen smell of it that went so naturally with the scents of carbolic soap and steam. Cat-cleanliness was part of Susan's particular mystery. She had been the same as a first-former, although first-formers are notoriously a fusty, inky-pawed crew. On one occasion the school captain of the time, catching a small girl at the un-heard-of rite of washing during break, had taken her persistence for insolence and the whole idea for cheek and attempted to expel her. But a child who *buzzes* her displeasure like something electric, until your hand tingles and you have to let go, is something too far outside normal experience to cope with. And the child would keep staring with those lilac eyes, and the whole incident had unnerved the prefect so badly she never got around to reporting it. . . .

Susan crossed to the mirror, flicked her corn-colored hair more or less into place, picked up her satchel again and headed for 5Q formroom, deserted now and dark. She turned on one light and packed her books for evening study, checking the subjects against the timetable pinned inside the desk lid. Then she walked back down the corridor toward the stairs.

Miss Hutton sat at her desk in the lower Sixth formroom and watched the girl pass the half-open door. Then she called softly, knowing she would hear.

"Susan?"

Susan slowed automatically and walked back to the room.

"Yes, Madam?"

Miss Hutton moistened her lip very slightly with her tongue and her fingers twined in each other restlessly. For a moment she looked undecided. She said, "You are rather late, aren't you?"

"Yes, Miss Hutton. I was packing my books."

Miss Hutton frowned and looked away from Susan's face and then back quickly as if she had come to a decision. She said, "What time does your bus leave?"

"Four-twenty-five, Madam."

Miss Hutton set her jaw. "Susan, do you think you could spare me

a few minutes?"

"Yes, of course."

"Come in," said Miss Hutton. "Close the door. Sit anywhere . . . Don't worry, you are not in trouble."

Susan smiled.

She took a seat in front of the mistress, eased her long legs a little awkwardly under the desk. She slid the satchel from her shoulder and waited with her eyes on Miss Hutton's face. The school was very quiet now, nearly all the pupils gone.

Miss Hutton rose, folded her arms, walked quickly across the dais to the window, looked down into the corner of the quad. She said, "Over the years I have come to have a special feeling about the sound the school makes as it empties. To me it seems that the building becomes a great conduit full of very fresh clear water; and the footsteps and the voices tinkle and splash along the corridors and down stairs until the last one is gone. Do you understand me, Susan?"

"Yes, Madam."

Miss Hutton smiled awkwardly, fingered her unpainted lip. In class she was very much of a martinet, but there was little to suggest that now. She was a small, neat, elderly woman, just a little bowed, and tiredness had sagged down the corners of her mouth and made fine lines round her eyes. She walked back to her desk, stood leaning her hands on its polished surface and looking down at Susan. She said, "As you know, Susan, I am retiring at the end of the present term. I had hoped to continue to the end of the school year in July but various considerations, among them my health, prompted an earlier decision. So in a fortnight's time I shall be gone. School life being what it is, one day tends to slip very rapidly into the next, more particularly as one becomes older." She cleared her throat. "This may very possibly be the last opportunity I have to talk to you like this, privately. And I want very particularly to ask you a question."

"Yes, Madam." There was no interrogation in Susan's voice. She spoke calmly, as if she had always known this conversation would take place and had already guessed its outcome.

Miss Hutton leaned forward a little. She inhaled slowly and held the breath, let it go again with a tiny sound. Her eyes were intent on the girl's face. "Susan," she said gently, "Who are you?"

A pause. Then, slowly, "I'm sorry, Madam. I don't know what you mean."

Miss Hutton shook her head slightly. She continued to watch Susan and the girl looked back calmly. They both remembered something that had happened just a week ago.

A classroom. Pale sunlight slanting across the desks, the tall windows bright with winter sky. Form 5Q had been reading Romeo

and Juliet. Miss Hutton had cast round for a Juliet and her eyes had stopped on Susan and she had asked her to speak the part. And when they had come to the impossible scene where Juliet imagines waking inside a tomb thirty prone-to-giggle fifth formers had been held by words that for the first time seemed to have a great singing meaning. In the quietness Miss Hutton had paced up between the desks and taken Susan's neglected book and walked back to the front of the form. Susan carried on for half a dozen lines then slowed and stopped, and the enchantment was broken. "I'm sorry, Madam," Susan said. "I can't remember any more."

Miss Hutton looked down at the book in her hand and frowned. "Susan, do you have this play by heart?"

"No, Madam. Only a few lines here and there. We did some of it in the lower school."

Someone whispered briefly and Miss Hutton silenced the offender with a look. She opened her mouth to speak, thought better of it and nodded briskly as if the subject was closed. Then she had returned the book to Susan, still open, and Susan looked at it as it lay on the desk and at the top of the page were the words "Persons Represented."

Miss Hutton laughed, not unmusically. She said, "You slipped up there, Susan. The best of us do occasionally." She became intent again. "You do have that play by heart, don't you?"

"Yes, Madam."

"And everything else you ever read for me?"

"Yes, Madam."

Miss Hutton nodded. "Yes, I know that. Everything, at one reading. But you're clever, my dear. You veil your mind, as you veil those eyes of yours. ... I don't know how you do it but that is what you do. . . . Why, Susan? Why? I ask you again, who are you? *Or what . . .*"

Silence. Then Susan said evenly, "I have a very retentive mind, Miss Hutton."

The teacher turned away abruptly and seemed to stare at the blackboard. Then she sat down in her chair, rested her elbows on the desk, laid her chin on her laced fingers. She said slowly, "Susan, when I started to teach, many years ago, I had certain ideals. I do not think I had any illusions, I realized that for each little success there would be many, many frustrations and failures and disappointments, but I had ideals. I don't think I altogether lost them. In fact I know I did not. Within my limitations I have been a good teacher. But now, right at the end, I cannot help a certain feeling of . . . unfulfilment. It seems that I am able to see nothing but the failures, all the children who showed promise who did not realize that promise for one reason or another. And of course for someone like myself who tries to teach from within the pupil rather than applying the arbitrary requirements

of syllabus in a process of verbal tarring and feathering, there must be with each child the ultimate disappointment of seeing her, or him, pass beyond your reach into what is generally termed adult life. You are left to guess what sort of person your little half-made creature finally becomes." She smiled slightly. "In my younger days, of course, things were not quite so hectic. Classes were smaller; we were not fighting the Battle of the Bulge as we do today. All you small people had more room to spread and grow; schools were not manufactories in quite the same sense as they are now. Or perhaps I am already assuming the rosy glasses of the elderly. For I am old." The smile flicked off, then returned. "I know most of you think of me as already decrepit," said Miss Hutton. The stock line would have raised a giggle from any fifth-former. This girl did not smile.

Miss Hutton picked up an ebony ruler from the desk and turned it slowly, watching the reflections run along its smooth darkness. She said, "I have realized something about myself at last, Susan. I am a very selfish person."

Susan did not blink.

The mistress laid the ruler down. She said, "In two weeks' time, after our little concert and the customary speeches for end of term, there will be a presentation. I shall be given a reading lamp or a Life of Johnson, and I shall make a short parting address wishing you all luck in the years to come and hoping you have a Merry Christmas. There will be three cheers for Miss Hutton. I can hear them now, very penetrating and shrill with the school captain leading them. Then I shall leave.

"I have bought a little cottage, not very far from here. It has a garden, not large and rather wild at the moment. I hope to spend quite a lot of time working on it. I shall dig, and plant, and after a year or so I shall have quite an attractive display of flowers. I shall come back to the school, of course, for Speech Days. For a little while there will be faces amongst you that I know. The little new people may notice me and ask, 'Who is that?' and somebody a little older and very scornful will say, "That's Miss Hutton, who used to teach English.' But that will pass, and afterwards I will be just another old lady for whom the monitors will have to find a seat. No one will remember."

Susan reached up and pushed a strand of hair back from her eyes.

"I went to my cottage last weekend," said Miss Hutton. "I stood in what will be the living room, and looked round the bareness, and planned where I should place this and that piece of furniture. And an odd thought came to me. It seemed that this little room, so still and cold, had been waiting for me for over sixty years. Do you understand how I felt?"

Susan stirred slightly. She said, “Yes Miss Hutton, I do.”

Miss Hutton nodded to herself vaguely. “Of course. Now, Susan, for a senior member of staff to seek counsel of a fifteen-year-old pupil is an act that I consider gross, and that I can only describe as an obscene privilege. But of course you are not a normal child. In fact, as we understand the term, you are not a child at all, are you?”

Very quietly. “No, Madam.”

A shadow seemed to touch the old woman’s face. A muscle twitched in her jaw. She said, “Not a child . . . and there is something at the back of your eyes that should make me afraid. I don’t know why it does not.”

Susan said softly, “How can I help you, Miss Hutton?”

The teacher made shapes in the air with her hands, as if symbols might be better than words to express what she wanted to say. “Susan, perhaps my need is very simple. I should have married. I should have liked children of my own; I could have watched them grow and ripen and marry perhaps, in their own time. But somehow I never got round to marriage. There was always too much to do at school. In a sense, although this will sound very stupid to you, you were all my children. And now you have gone into time, and I am left with my flowers and my little silent room. As I told you, I am selfish. These things should be enough. These and the knowledge that I did my best. But they are not.”

Susan’s eyes were lowered modestly. Her wrist was touching the wood of the desk; she wore a slim watch, and the desk top was acting as a sounding board for the tiny thing so that its ticking seemed to ring in the room.

“Susan,” said Miss Hutton, and her voice whispered and creaked, “I remember you when you came to this school, a little smidgin of a thing, all plaits and eyes. Now you are taller than I. I’ve watched you grow, over the years, and I know, *I know,* that you have more understanding than I, and more compassion than any of us ... I was tempted to say, than any of us poor humans. And yet by our standards you are a half-grown child.” She shook her head again. “And like any child you are a die, a matrix. But the shape you will stamp out, when you are grown, is past my imagining.”

The girl was silent. Her quietness had a penetrating quality; the gray walls of the rooms, the rows of empty desks seemed in themselves to be listening and waiting.

“I think,” said the mistress, “that what I am asking you to do is to take the place of all my other vanished children. Be my child, Susan. Tell me what you intend to do with yourself. Will you be a doctor, a dancer? An artist perhaps, a scientist? Tell me and I shall be able to follow you, in my mind at least. Perhaps I might even hear of you or

see you again one day. By doing this, I think you would make up for all the rest."

Silence lengthened; the ticking of the watch became louder until it was the noise of a little frenzied machine clacking off irretrievable seconds. Then Susan raised her head. "I'm sorry," she said simply. "I don't know what I shall be. So I can't tell anyone, Miss Hutton. Not even you."

Miss Hutton stared at the desk and her hands clenched until the knuckles showed white with strain. The sound of the watch clattered in her mind and the little cottage room seemed suddenly to grow out of darkness, chilling her as if its very walls harbored an unearthly cold. Miss Hutton shuddered and gasped; then something seemed almost to shoulder past her into that room, something young and golden and intensely alive, something that brushed away fears and ghosts and oldness and snapped open windows to let in sunlight and warmth. Miss Hutton laughed uncertainly, seeing the little room before her with the vividness of hallucination. There was no darkness now; its windows were open and through them she could see June flowers, a brightness of grass, cumulus ships sailing the intense sky. This was a place to which she could come in dignity, and in peace. She could rest here, and she would not be alone ...

Miss Hutton looked up and blinked. Susan was leaning over her and it seemed to the mistress that even while she watched a light was dying away from the girl's eyes. She stared fascinated while a lilac brightness snapped and glittered and ebbed; then Susan was only a gentle-faced blond girl in a dark blue school uniform and blazer. On her shoulder, a satchel of books.

"I'm sorry, Miss Hutton," said Susan. "I must catch my bus now."

Miss Hutton blinked again and realized the fear was gone, replaced by an unassailable feeling of lightness, as if a question had indeed been asked and answered but not with words. She took a breath and when she spoke her voice was quite different; it had regained its old briskness. "Yes," she said. "On you go. I'm glad we had our little chat. And Susan . . ."

"Madam?"

"Thank you," said Miss Hutton.

Susan watched her a moment longer. Then she did an impossible thing. She reached forward and gripped the old woman's shoulder briefly with one hand.

Miss Hutton sat at the desk for a full minute after Susan had gone. Then her hand moved up to the sleeve of her cardigan and touched it and it seemed a warmth came from the place and suffused through her body.

Susan paused in the locker rooms to retie her house sash; then she

took her coat from the peg and shrugged herself into it. She tightened the belt, smoothed the collar, ran her finger round inside it to free her hair. She flicked her head, hefted the satchel and walked out to the bus queue as the vehicle ground to a halt outside the school gates. She boarded it and sat on her own, leaning back on the seat with her eyes closed. The chugging of the engine, the noise from the load of children, sounded faintly. She felt tired, as if for the moment she was drained of all energy. A Grammar School fourth-former ogled at her and she grinned without opening her eyes; another, greatly daring, tweaked the end of her sash but she did not react. Her ears told her of the vehicle's progress; here the driver changed down for a corner, here he accelerated on a slope. She listened to the town being left behind. The bus halted four times and juddered away again. When it reached Susan's stop she climbed down and stood and watched the tail lights move round a bend of the road and out of sight. The engine sound faded away; a little wind came from somewhere, chilling with a promise of snow and ice. Susan started to walk.

A hundred yards or so along the main road she turned off into a lane. The estate where she lived was new and as yet there were no streetlights. In front and far off she could see the yellow rectangles of house windows and porches. She entered the darkest part of the road, moving slowly beneath the bare branches of trees.

Beneath the hedge, inside Harold Sanderson, a red angel and a white fought for mastery. Harold panted; sweat started out on his face and slid down his cheeks, his hands gripped convulsively, the fingers crumbling twigs and earth. And the red angel conquered, and waved its sword and shouted an awful truth, and Harold growled and slid forward, small now only in stature. His fingers were crooked, wanting to squeeze and twist.

The tall girl walked unconcernedly, scuffing dead leaves with her shoes. Out on the main road headlights flashed; a beam of light flicked her hair for a second and the hair was yellow and soft. Harold shuddered and began to make a moaning noise like an animal. Another five steps, four, three, two, one ... He sprang, reaching with his claws.

The satchel, loaded solid with books, caught him squarely under the jaw. He fell back and another blow seemed to explode across his ear, sending him sprawling. He saw a great flash of light and when it was gone the angel had vanished. He rolled over, feeling wet earth beneath him, and his hands came up to protect his face. "No," muttered Harold. "No more . . ."

Susan bent over him, close enough to see the alien thing that sprawled in his brain like a cancer. Her eyes shone and she wrenched at the thing with disgust; unwanted neural links swelled and popped

like worms. *There is blood on your hands,* raged Susan silently. *Why didn't you come to me before ...*

Harold sat up dazedly, unable to remember. "Sorry," he wheezed. "Must have fallen . . . sorry if I gave you a turn." He looked up blinking in the dark, only able to see her silhouette. His face was not quite the same. In the center of his mind now was a little vacancy, harmless as a sunny meadow.

"That's all right," said Susan quietly. "Let me help." Her hand found his arm and half hoisted him to his feet.

He trotted beside her, chattering, till they reached the first of the houses. "Really obliged," said Harold, "very much obliged. I think I must have knocked my head when I went over. Might've laid there all night. Dark under them trees there, you could lay all night easy and not get found. ... I was a bit funny but I'm all right now, it's going off. Can't think what I was doing right out here, that I can't. I've heard of these lapses of memory, I reckon I had one of them. ... No thanks, I shall be fine, got a car down the lane, see. . . . Can't think what I was doing, wandering about like that." He stopped at Susan's gate. "Thanks again miss, thanks very much indeed . . . goodnight miss, and thanks ... yes ...."

Susan watched him go. "Be careful," she called softly. "It's very dark. Don't slip again." She waited until he was out of sight, then she walked up the path to the house.

She hung her coat and satchel in the hall and walked through to the lounge. The curtains were drawn, a fire crackling in the hearth. In the corner the television set was working quietly. Melanie sat rather grumpily on the mat, feet apart, hands spread each side of her. "Susan," she complained, before her sister was halfway through the door, "I can't find my big animal book. And I wanted it tonight for Brownies. Do you know where it is?"

Susan thought for a moment and saw the book quite clearly, wedged down behind the back of the sideboard. She retrieved it and dropped it in Melanie's lap. "You always know where everything is," said the little girl. "I wish I did." She began to leaf through the book. "Anne Ryder's brother is in India and he wrote to say he'd got a mongoose and there's a picture of one in the book and I wanted to take it to show her. Thanks, Susan..."

Susan smiled.

Her mother came through from the kitchen, hands full of plates. She said, "You're late, love. Did something happen?"

"No, nothing, mother. I'm sorry. ... I stopped to help someone who was lost."

The older woman frowned and started arranging cork mats on the table. "Who was it?"

"A man called Mr. Sanderson. He had a car, and he couldn't find the way. It was all right, I knew him."

Her mother paused with a dinner mat in her hand. "There's no Sandersons on the estate. Not that I can think of. Susan . . ."

"Yes?"

"You know what I've told you about things like that," said her mother for Melanie's benefit. "It isn't always a good idea to talk to people you don't know, even if they seem nice. Especially after dark. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes, mother."

"Don't do it again, then."

Susan shook her head slowly. "It was all right. He was ill but he's better now."

Her mother bit her lip and turned away and Susan sensed the worry churning in her mind. She smiled.

Back turned to her, her mother jerked. "Susan," she snapped, *"stop it. . . ."*

Susan followed her to the kitchen.

Out of sight of Melanie her mother turned to face her, gripped the girl's arms above the elbows and tried to see down into her eyes. But the eyes were veiled. She said, "Susan . . ." Then she stopped and the frown came again, deeply. Her tongue stumbled, not seeming able to find the right words. "Your father and I," she said. "We're very worried. We were talking . . . we're both very worried about you. You will take care, won't you? Be so very careful. . .

Susan nodded quietly. "I shall be careful."

Her mother reached up and stroked the hair from Susan's forehead. Her eyes were flicking from side to side across the girl's face as though she was trying hard to understand something. "Susan," she said, and the words seemed to be squeezed out against her will, "Susan, dear . . . *who are you?"*

A long wait. The television played softly in the lounge. A car passed in the lane and the sound vanished in the distance. Then Susan shook her head. "I'm sorry, mother," she said. "I don't know what you mean...."

She picked up the teacups and carried them into the other room.

In British s-f nowadays, all roads lead eventually to Mike Moorcock's Ladbroke Grove flat-and-office, where a hot argument on the virtues of the Ontological Approach or a stiff debate on the Metaphysics of Time may—at any hour of the day or night—compete with (what I am assured is) a connoisseur's collection of rock 'n' roll (full-volume, of course), or with Moorcock's own excellent blues guitar— while one of the young literary protégés of the household

pecks out the end to a rent-payer story on the typewriter in the living room, and three-year-old Sophie struggles to open the concealed Victorian lock of the latest strongbox or escritoire Daddy has brought home from a walk down the Portobello Road.

You understand, I am exaggerating—but not much.

And perhaps you understand, too, how interest and enthusiasm on the part of (particularly new, but also established) authors spreads and multiplies around such a focal point. The results do not all show up in New *Worlds* (or in *Impulse*): far from it. The stories that germinate in sessions like these, or on the trip home, are as likely to turn up in the higher-paying American magazines, or in the flourishing British paperback book market.

Among the younger writers most often found in the center of the Moorcock ferment are Charles Platt ("Lone Zone" in New *Worlds,* No. 152) B. J. Bayley ("All the King's Men," No. 148), Langdon Jones ("The Leveller," No. 152, and "The Empathy Machine," Science *Fantasy),* Hilary Bailey and Thorn Keyes, who both produced exciting "firsts" in 1964, and Johnny Byrne—

Born, *Dublin, 1937.* Convent *and Jesuit educated. Came to England, 1957. Studied some more and then went on the road, sleeping under bridges, picking apples in Kent and pears in* Somerset.

Jobs include art gallery manager, barman, electrician's mate, Christmas tree feller in the lake district, lifesaver on the Isis in Oxford, dullage sorter on Liverpool docks, editor of three *small circulation magazines, door* to *door vac salesman, seller of devotional articles—monstrances, chasubles, altar breads,* prie dieux, *etc., to the English Catholic public. A spell in Paris teaching English to foreigners and finally the same kind of teaching here in London.*

"Yesterdays' Gardens" was commissioned *for a French children's magazine. ... By the time I got round to writing and translating it, it was no* longer *needed. It is dedicated to the son of Anselm Hollo, the Finnish poet who lives and works in England.*

* * * *

YESTERDAYS' GARDENS
JOHNNY BYRNE

Uncle Ernie sat in an armchair, his eyes vacantly held by a book. From time to time he said things softly to the child playing on the carpet. His niece had taken the roof off her doll's house and was engrossed in arranging the tiny articles of furniture.

"Can I play with the box, Uncle Ernie?" she asked him again. When he didn't answer she sang a rhyme she had made up herself.

> "Uncle Ernie has
> hidden the box
> and now his tea
> is cold in the pot.

"I met the man again today," she added after a moment

"What man?" Uncle Ernie was not really listening.

"The man from the silver cup, the man in the silver cup who lives in our garden."

Uncle Ernie shuddered in spite of the heat. He laid down his book and stared in silence into the fire.

"Your tea is cold," she said accusingly. He didn't answer and she jumped up, saying hopefully: "Give me the box and I'll fill your cup with nice hot tea." She filled one of her doll's teacups, adding tiny amounts of milk and sugar. He handled it carefully when she put it in his hands. "Don't forget to stir it, Uncle Ernie," she sang, going back to her house.

"Go to bed, go to bed." He was almost pleading. Then he remembered something important. "You are going away tomorrow, go to bed."

"You must give me back the box first. The man said that you must. You took it and it's mine. That's not right." Her voice was very serious.

"There is no silver cup in my garden. Nobody can live in a silver cup." Uncle Ernie tried to control himself. "And I told you never to go into the garden." His voice rose to a tired shout.

The child looked up happily. "Am I going home tomorrow?" She smiled. "Then I can take it to bed with me, can't I, Uncle Ernie?" She was silent for a moment. "Am I going home tomorrow?"

Uncle Ernie looked bleakly at nothing. "No, you're not going

home tomorrow. You are going to stay with Dr. Esslin and his wife. I've told you that you can't go home again. Your house blew down in the night, remember?" He looked at her doubtfully, trying to decide if she was still young enough for this kind of talk. "They are calling for you early in the morning," he added finally.

The child altered carefully the position of a bed. She didn't appear to hear him. "Why do you never go into the garden?" she said suddenly.

"Gardens are bad for people. They're bad for the hair, bad for the bone and worse for little children." Uncle Ernie spoke as if he were remembering a well-remembered lesson. His niece echoed him parrotlike:

> "Little boys and
> girls should know
> that gardens in
> air are bad they
> give pain in the
> head pain in the
> bone and all the
> lovely hair is
> vanished by the
> nasty jealous air.

"Why is the garden dry and yellow?" She never looked at him when she asked this question. "When I was little it was green and noisy. Why isn't it noisy now?"

"It's quiet," Uncle Ernie said absently. He was remembering and answered her questions from long habit. His eyes turned to the forgotten book once more, and he said several times, "Gardens are bad: they are yellow and full of dust."

Something in the way he said it made her angry. She kicked the house and the boom it made thundered hollowly round the solid rock walls of the room. She began to say and do things she knew would make him angry. "Why did you send the birds away?" She stopped and, pressing her arms tightly to her back, she pushed her neck stiffly forward and tried to imitate a sparrow. "When I was small I saw little birds that went like this. And wet things that used to crawl up tree trunks. Then when it was time for bed this is what the big black ones used to shout high in the sky at night." She made loud shrilling noises and flapped her arms awkwardly.

She calmed down and her voice lost its shrillness. "The man who gave me the box that you took from me couldn't tell why the sky is always red. Jimmy Esslin made up a song about that," she added and

sang:

> “Red night, red day
> now is the time
> to go away.”

“Gardens are poison,” said Uncle Ernie. “They’re bad for the hair, worse for the bone and a danger to little children.” He wasn’t listening.

“Can you tell me the name of the dancing flower again? It had real silk on its wings. My daddy showed me how to hold it so carefully in my hand, just like that!” She held out her hand and showed him how. “It moved if you held it properly and when you opened your hand it danced all around you and then went home.”

“Yellow and dust, bad,” said Uncle Ernie staring sightlessly at the pages in front of him. “Bad it is ... so bad.”

“You told me a lie!” she remembered suddenly.

Uncle Ernie looked up at her.

“That place a long way down the tunnel. The place where you said Mama and Daddy are buried,” she pointed, “they are not there at all. The man from the silver cup told me that you lied. They were in the garden when the big light came the night they vanished. . . . Oh, it was very bright. I saw it through my bedclothes. And they were in the garden when it came and I heard them make a noise just before the windsong came pushing all the houses down. The garden was gone after, and I didn’t see them again. The man said that they burned up with the birds and trees all yellow like the grass. The man said that they were still in the garden only I couldn’t see them.”

“There is no man in the garden. Nobody lives in my garden, gardens are bad.” Uncle Ernie spoke as if he were trying to convince himself.

“You told me a lie,” she said relentlessly. “You told me a big lie.”

Uncle Ernie came to life and snapped shut his book. “To bed with you. The Doctor will be calling early for you in the morning.”

“The Doctor wants to do something to me. I don’t want to go.”

He got cross with her. “Remember what happened to the little girl you played with last year. She went into the garden and stayed in the air. Remember! She didn’t go to the Doctor. Remember what happened to her afterward.”

“I don’t want to go. I want to go home. Jimmy Esslin makes fun of me because of the marks on my face.”

Uncle Ernie began to pack up her toys. “You won’t see Jimmy Esslin. You won’t see him again. He wouldn’t stay out of the air.”

She began to plead with him for the box he had taken from her.

“Will you tell me what is in it if I give it to you?” he asked her.

“Nothing!” she answered, her voice too high.

“And what were you doing with it the last time you had it?” Uncle Ernie had wanted to ask her this before.

“Just playing!” she said. “Can I have it with me in bed, now? It’s mine,” she warned him. “The man said it was mine. He said everything I wanted was in it.”

Uncle Ernie considered for a moment.

“Will you go with Dr. Esslin in the morning?”

“Only if you give me back the box.”

He gave her the box. “I’ll be quiet,” she said. “You won’t hear a thing.” She held it tightly.

It was small, black and rectangular and had a concealed lid. She shook it first and then opened it too quickly for him to see how. She showed him the inside. “Look, Uncle Ernie, there’s nothing in it, isn’t it nice?”

He lifted up the doll’s house and took her to the bedroom. She undressed and got into bed still clutching the box. She kissed him and whispered, “Thank you, Uncle Ernie, thank you.”

After he left she got out of bed and started to play again. She crept silently to the kitchen and got some hot water. She went back to her room and unpacked her tea service. Sitting on the floor she made a pot of tea, handling the water and tea grains with elaborate care. She began to chant softly:

> “Uncle Ernie has given me the box
> and now his tea is hot in the pot.”

Almost happily she repeated this several times. Then her voice became a whisper and she started to coax: “Come out now, come out, Uncle Ernie, come out for your tea.” She was speaking to the box, which was on the floor beside her. Nothing happened, and she raised her voice just the tiniest fraction. “Uncle Ernie, come out for your tea this instant!”

Uncle Ernie shuffled out and she helped him drink the tea. After he had finished she fussed over him for a while and then sent him back.

Then she called the man—the man who had given her the box.

They spoke for a long time and played games with the box. She cried when it was time for him to leave, and wanted to go with him.

He stayed and told her about skies that were blue and suns that were white when you looked at them. He told her about rain that didn’t burn and fruit that grew and was good for the bone. He said that children looked beautiful with hair and she remembered. She was

asleep when he left. She had a busy day tomorrow.

Just now, there is no "Ladbroke Grove" here. Some such center somehow always accompanies a "literary quantum jump"—that unpredictable phenomenon that draws in new writers and new readers at the same time, and creates a new level of quality—to meet new critical standards—in its operative area.

We have the writers; we have the markets; we have the readers. But nothing is happening to bring them together. Much of the best work is being done entirely away from the social-professional nexus of "science fiction." (Witness Donald Barthelme and Harvey Jacobs in this volume . . . Stanley Elkin's "Perlmutter at the East Pole" in the *Saturday Evening Post* . . . William Maxwell and Robert Henderson in *The New Yorker* . . . and how many others that I won't even hear about till next year or the year after?)

There is no lack of either talent or reader interest. But the combining force is not at work. There are no exchange centers of ideas and criticism. We have had such focal centers in the past; my guess is we will have some new ones soon. Because, for all my description of Ladbroke Grove as *the* center, it doesn't work that way. Moorcock's living-room-office is *the* place in London now—but the idea sparks are flying between Ladbroke Grove and Oxford; between both of those and the literary magazine *Ambit,* where George MacBeth and J. G. Ballard publish back-to-back; between MacBeth in London and Redgrove in Leeds, and through them both on BBC-3's poetry programs, to a whole new audience—while Penguin Books, and, lately, Jonathan Cape have hooked into the process by using good surrealist and nonobjective art for their s-f jackets.

Nor is a central physical meeting place absolutely necessary. John Campbell in 1940 and Anthony Boucher in 1950 each filled the role of host and mixer magnificently. With writers spread out all over the country, they did it primarily by mail—and by providing the most essential meeting place, the pages of a vital, growing magazine.

For about five years, between 1958 and 1962, such a center seemed to be growing again at Ziff-Davis, where Cele Lalli (then Goldsmith) was editing *Fantastic* and *Amazing:* David R. Bunch, Thomas Disch, Larry Eisenberg, Phyllis Gotlieb, Keith Laumer, Robert Rohrer, Roger Zelazny, all came out of these pages. (Now *Amazing* and *Fantastic* have been sold, and the new policy seems to be primarily reprint.)

The closest thing to it since then has been Fred Pohl's new-writer-per-issue policy for *If*—where R. A. Lafferty, Larry Niven, and Norman Kagan first appeared. The policy continues to turn up good prospects: Jonathan Brand, Hayden Howard, Alexei Panshin, and Bruce

McAllister might—any or all—develop interestingly. But the "combining force," whatever it is, is not there—nor at *F&SF,* although it continues to attract, and select, superior new writers. (Since 1960, F&SF has come up with a number of exciting "Firsts," among whom Vance Aandahl, Jane Beauclerk, Calvin Demmon, Sonya Dorman, Terry Carr, and Jody Scott come most readily to mind. *Astounding/ Analog* turned up R. C. FitzPatrick, Richard Olin, Rick Raphael, and Norman Spinrad over the same period.)

Possibly the new SFWA (Science Fiction Writers of America) will be able to supply the spark—as for some years it was supplied by Theodore Cogswell's extraordinary pro-fan letter-journal, PITFCS (Proceedings of the Institute of Twenty-First Century Studies). Or perhaps some bright publisher will give Cele Laili a new magazine.

In the meantime, two of the top graduates of *Fantastic's* Class of '62 have just published their first novels: Zelazny's *This Immortal* (Ace) and Disch's The *Genocides* (Berkley). (Zelazny also took two of the first SFWA awards for 1965: for the novelette, "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth" in *F&SF* and the novella "He Who Shapes" in *Amazing.)*

Tom Disch's second novel (tentatively. *White* Fang Goes Dingo) will have been published by Ace before this *Annual* is out; and his short stories will have appeared in everything from *Galaxy* and *Alfred Hitchcock* to *Mademoiselle,* while he himself roams Europe, following the music festivals and writing between programs.

* * * *

THE ROACHES
THOMAS M. DISCH

Miss Marcia Kenwell had a perfect horror of cockroaches. It was an altogether different horror than the one which she felt, for instance, toward the color puce. Marcia Kenwell loathed the little things. She couldn't see one without wanting to scream. Her revulsion was so extreme that she could not bear to crush them under the soles of her shoes. No, that would be too awful. She would run, instead, for the spray-can of Black Flag and inundate the little beast with poison until it ceased to move or got out of reach into one of the cracks where they all seemed to live. It was horrible, unspeakably horrible, to think of them nestling in the walls, under the linoleum, only waiting for the lights to be turned off, and then. . . . No, it was best not to think about it.

Every week she looked through the *Times* hoping to find another apartment, but either the rents were prohibitive (this *was* Manhattan, and Marcia's wage was a mere $62.50 a week, gross) or the building was obviously infested. She could always tell: there would be husks of dead roaches scattered about in the dust beneath the sink, stuck to the greasy backside of the stove, lining the out-of-reach cupboard shelves like the rice on the church steps after a wedding. She left such rooms in a passion of disgust, unable even to think till she reached her own apartment, where the air would be thick with the wholesome odors of Black Flag, Roach-It, and the toxic pastes that were spread on slices of potato and hidden in a hundred cracks which only she and the roaches knew about.

At least, she thought, *I keep my apartment clean.* And truly the linoleum under the sink, the backside and underside of the stove, and the white contact paper lining her cupboards were immaculate. She could not understand how other people could let these matters get so entirely out-of-hand. *They must be Puerto Ricans,* she decided—and shivered again with horror, remembering that litter of empty husks, the filth and the disease.

Such extreme antipathy toward insects—toward one particular insect—may seem excessive, but Marcia Kenwell was not really exceptional in this. There are many women, bachelor women like Marcia chiefly, who share this feeling, though one may hope, for sweet charity's sake, that they escape Marcia's peculiar fate.

Marcia's phobia was, as in most such cases, hereditary in origin. That is to say, she inherited it from her mother, who had a morbid

fear of anything that crawled or skittered or lived in tiny holes. Mice, frogs, snakes, worms, bugs—all could send Mrs. Kenwell into hysterics, and it would indeed have been a wonder if little Marcia had not taken after her. It was rather strange, though, that her fear had become so particular, and stranger still that it should particularly be cockroaches that captured her fancy, for Marcia had never seen a single cockroach, didn't know what they were. (The Kenwells were a Minnesota family, and Minnesota families simply don't have cockroaches.) In fact, the subject did not arise until Marcia was nineteen and setting out (armed with nothing but a high-school diploma and pluck, for she was not, you see, a very attractive girl) to conquer New York.

On the day of her departure, her favorite and only surviving aunt came with her to the Greyhound terminal (her parents being deceased) and gave her this parting advice: "Watch out for the roaches, Marcia darling. New York City is full of cockroaches." At that time (at almost any time really) Marcia hardly paid attention to her aunt, who had opposed the trip from the start and given a hundred or more reasons why Marcia had better not go, not till she was older at least.

Her aunt had been proven right on all counts: Marcia, after five years and fifteen employment-agency fees, could find nothing in New York but dull jobs at mediocre wages; she had no more friends than when she lived on West 16th; and, except for its view (the Chock-Full-O'-Nuts warehouse and a patch of sky), her present apartment on lower Thompson Street was not a great improvement on its predecessor.

The city was full of promises, but they had all been pledged to other people. The city Marcia knew was sinful, indifferent, dirty, and dangerous. Every day she read accounts of women attacked in subway stations, raped in the streets, knifed in their own beds. A hundred people looked on curiously all the while and offered no assistance. And on top of everything else there were the roaches!

There were roaches everywhere, but Marcia didn't see them until she'd been in New York a month. They came to her—or she to them—at Silversmith's on Nassau Street, a stationery shop where she had been working for three days. It was the first job she'd been able to find. Alone or helped by a pimply stockboy (in all fairness it must be noted that Marcia was not without an acne problem of her own), she wandered in rows of rasp-edged metal shelves in the musty basement, making an inventory of the sheaves and piles and boxes of bond paper, leatherette-bound diaries, pins and clips, and carbon paper. The basement was dirty and so dim that she needed a flashlight for the lowest shelves. In the obscurest corner, a faucet leaked perpetually

into a gray sink; she had been resting near this sink, sipping a cup of tepid coffee (saturated, in the New York manner, with sugar and drowned in milk), thinking, probably, of how she could afford several things she simply couldn't afford, when she noticed the dark spots moving on the side of the sink. At first she thought they might be no more than motes floating in the jelly of her eyes, or the giddy dots that one sees after over-exertion on a hot day. But they persisted too long to be illusory, and Marcia drew nearer, feeling compelled to bear witness. *How do I know they are insects?* she thought.

How are we to explain the fact that what repels us most can be at times—at the same time—inordinately attractive? Why is the cobra poised to strike so beautiful? The fascination of the abomination is something that. . . . Something which we would rather not account for. The subject borders on the obscene, and there is no need to deal with it here, except to note the breathless wonder with which Marcia observed these first roaches of hers. Her chair was drawn so close to the sink that she could see the mottling of their oval, unsegmented bodies, the quick scuttering of their thin legs, and the quicker flutter of their antennae. They moved randomly, proceeding nowhere, centered nowhere. They seemed greatly disturbed over nothing. *Perhaps,* Marcia thought, *my presence has a morbid effect on them?*

Only then did she become aware, aware fully, that these were the cockroaches of which she had been warned. Repulsion took hold; her flesh curdled on her bones. She screamed and fell back in her chair, almost upsetting a shelf of odd-lots. Simultaneously the roaches disappeared over the edge of the sink and into the drain.

Mr. Silversmith, coming downstairs to inquire the source of Marcia's alarm, found her supine and unconscious. He sprinkled her face with tap water, and she awoke with a shudder of nausea. She refused to explain why she had screamed and insisted that she must leave Mr. Silversmith's employ immediately. He, supposing that the pimply stock-boy (who was his son) had made a pass at Marcia, paid her for the three days she had worked and let her go without regrets. From that moment on, cockroaches were to be a regular feature of Marcia's existence.

On Thompson Street Marcia was able to reach a sort of stalemate with the cockroaches. She settled into a comfortable routine of pastes and powders, scrubbing and waxing, prevention (she never had even a cup of coffee without washing and drying cup and coffeepot immediately afterward) and ruthless extermination. The only roaches who trespassed upon her two cozy rooms came up from the apartment below, and they did not stay long, you may be sure. Marcia would have complained to the landlady, except that it was the landlady's apartment and her roaches. She had been inside, for a glass of wine on

Christmas eve, and she had to admit that it wasn't exceptionally dirty. It was, in fact, more than commonly clean—but *that* was not enough in New York. *If everyone,* Marcia thought, *took as much care as I, there would soon be no cockroaches in New York City.*

Then (it was March and Marcia was halfway through her sixth year in the city) the Shchapalovs moved in next door. There were three of them—two men and a woman— and they were old, though exactly how old it was hard to say: they had been aged by more than time. Perhaps they weren't more than forty. The woman, for instance, though she still had brown hair, had a face wrinkly as a prune and was missing several teeth. She would stop Marcia in the hallway or on the street, grabbing hold of her coatsleeve, and talk to her—always a simple lament about the weather, which was too hot or too cold or too wet or too dry. Marcia never knew half of what the old woman was saying, she mumbled so. Then she'd totter off to the grocery with her bagful of empties.

The Shchapalovs, you see, drank. Marcia, who had a rather exaggerated idea of the cost of alcohol (the cheapest thing she could imagine was vodka), wondered where they got the money for all the drinking they did. She knew they didn't work, for on days when Marcia was home with the flu she could hear the three Shchapalovs through the thin wall between their kitchen and hers screaming at each other to exercise their adrenal glands. *They're on welfare,* Marcia decided. Or perhaps the man with only one eye was a veteran on pension.

She didn't so much mind the noise of their arguments (she was seldom home in the afternoon), but she couldn't stand their singing. Early in the evening they'd start in, singing along with the radio stations. Everything they listened to sounded like Guy Lombardo. Later, about eight o'clock, they sang *a cappella.* Strange, soulless noises rose and fell like Civil Defense sirens; there were bellowings, bayings, and cries. Marcia had heard something like it once on a Folkways record of Czechoslovakian wedding chants. She was quite beside herself whenever the awful noise started up and had to leave the house till they were done. A complaint would do no good: the Shchapalovs had a right to sing at that hour.

Besides, one of the men was said to be related by marriage to the landlady. That's how they got the apartment, which had been used as a storage space until they'd moved in. Marcia couldn't understand how the three of them could fit into such a little space—just a room-and-a-half with a narrow window opening onto the air shaft. (Marcia had discovered that she could see their entire living space through a hole that had been broken through the wall when the plumbers had installed a sink for the Shchapalovs.)

But if their singing distressed her, *what* was she to do about the roaches? The Shchapalov woman, who was the sister of one man and married to the other—or else the men were brothers and she was the wife of one of them (sometimes, it seemed to Marcia, from the words that came through the walls, that she was married to neither of them — or to both), was a bad housekeeper, and the Shchapalov apartment was soon swarming with roaches. Since Marcia's sink and the Shchapalovs' were fed by the same pipes and emptied into a common drain, a steady overflow of roaches was disgorged into Marcia's immaculate kitchen. She could spray and lay out more poisoned potatoes; she could scrub and dust and stuff Kleenex tissues into holes where the pipes passed through the wall: it was all to no avail. The Shchapalov roaches could always lay another million eggs in the garbage bags rotting beneath the Shchapalov sink. In a few days they would be swarming through the pipes and cracks and into Marcia's cupboards. She would lie in bed and watch them (this was possible because Marcia kept a night-light burning in each room) advancing across the floor and up the walls, trailing the Shchapalovs' filth and disease everywhere they went.

One such evening the roaches were especially bad, and Marcia was trying to muster the resolution to get out of her warm bed and attack them with Roach-It. She had left the windows open from the conviction that cockroaches do not like the cold, but she found that she liked it much less. When she swallowed, it hurt, and she knew she was coming down with a cold. And all because of *them!*

"Oh go away!" she begged. *"Go away! Go away! Get out of my apartment."*

She addressed the roaches with the same desperate intensity with which she sometimes (though not often in recent years) addressed prayers to the Almighty. Once she had prayed all night long to get rid of her acne, but in the morning it was worse than ever. People in intolerable circumstances will pray to anything. Truly, there are no atheists in foxholes: the men there pray to the bombs that they may land somewhere else.

The only strange thing in Marcia's case is that her prayers were answered. The cockroaches fled from her apartment as quickly as their little legs could carry them— and in straight lines, too. Had they heard her? Had they understood?

Marcia could still see one cockroach coming down from the cupboard. *"Stop!"* she commanded. And it stopped.

At Marcia's spoken command, the cockroach would march up and down, to the left and to the right. Suspecting that her phobia had matured into madness, Marcia left her warm bed, turned on the light, and cautiously approached the roach, which remained motionless, as

she had bade it. *"Wiggle your antennas,"* she commanded. The cockroach wiggled its antennae.

She wondered if they would *all* obey her and found, within the next few days, that they all would. They would do anything she told them to. They would eat poison out of her hand. Well, not exactly out of her hand, but it amounted to the same thing. They were devoted to her. Slavishly.

It is the end, she thought, *of my roach problem.* But of course it was only the beginning.

Marcia did not question too closely the *reason* the roaches obeyed her. She had never much troubled herself with abstract problems. After expending so much time and attention on them, it seemed only natural that she should exercise a certain power over them. However she was wise enough never to speak of this power to anyone else—even to Miss Bismuth at the insurance office. Miss Bismuth read the horoscope magazines and claimed to be able to communicate with her mother, aged sixty-eight, telepathically. Her mother lived in Ohio. But what would Marcia have said: that *she* could communicate telepathically with cockroaches? Impossible.

Nor did Marcia use her power for any other purpose than keeping the cockroaches out of her own apartment. Whenever she saw one, she simply commanded it to go to the Shchapalov apartment and stay there. It was surprising then that there were always more roaches coming back through the pipes. Marcia assumed that they were younger generations. Cockroaches are known to breed fast. But it was easy enough to send them back to the Shchapalovs.

"Into their beds," she added as an afterthought. *"Go into their beds."* Disgusting as it was, the idea gave her a queer thrill of pleasure.

The next morning, the Shchapalov woman, smelling a little worse than usual (Whatever was it, Marcia wondered, that they drank?), was waiting at the open door of her apartment. She wanted to speak to Marcia before she left for work. Her housedress was mired from an attempt at scrubbing the floor, and while she sat there talking, she tried to wring out the scrubwater.

"No idea!" she exclaimed. "You ain't got no idea how bad! 'S terrible!"

"What?" Marcia asked, knowing perfectly well what.

"The boogs! Oh, the boogs are just everywhere. Don't you have em, sweetheart? I don't know what to do. I try to keep a decent house, God knows—" She lifted her rheumy eyes to heaven, testifying. "—but I don't know what to do." She leaned forward, confidingly. "You won't believe this, sweetheart, but last night ..." A cockroach began to climb out of the limp strands of hair straggling down into the woman's eyes. "... they got into bed with us! Would you believe it? There must have

been a hundred of em. I said to Osip, I said—What's wrong, sweetheart?"

Marcia, speechless with horror, pointed at the roach, which had almost reached the bridge of the woman's nose.

"Yech!" the woman agreed, smashing it and wiping her dirtied thumb on her dirtied dress. "Goddam boogs! I hate em, I swear to God. But what's a person gonna do? Now, what I wanted to ask, sweetheart, is do you have a problem with the boogs? Being as how you're right next door, I thought—" She smiled a confidential smile, as though to say this is just between us ladies. Marcia almost expected a roach to skitter out between her gapped teeth.

"No," she said. "No, I use Black Flag." She backed away from the doorway toward the safety of the stairwell. "Black Flag," she said again, louder. "Black Flag," she shouted from the foot of the stairs. Her knees trembled so, that she had to hold onto the metal banister for support.

At the insurance office that day, Marcia couldn't keep her mind on her work five minutes at a time. (Her work in the Actuarial Dividends department consisted of adding up long rows of two-digit numbers on a Burroughs adding machine and checking the similar additions of her coworkers for errors.) She kept thinking of the cockroaches in the tangled hair of the Shchapalov woman, of her bed teeming with roaches, and of other, less concrete horrors on the periphery of consciousness. The numbers swam and swarmed before her eyes, and twice she had to go to the Ladies' Room, but each time it was a false alarm. Nevertheless, lunchtime found her with no appetite. Instead of going down to the employee cafeteria she went out into the fresh April air and strolled along 23rd Street. Despite the spring, it all seemed to bespeak a sordidness, a festering corruption. The stones of the Flatiron Building oozed damp blackness; the gutters were heaped with soft decay; the smell of burning grease hung in the air outside the cheap restaurants like cigarette smoke in a close room.

The afternoon was worse. Her fingers would not touch the correct numbers on the machine unless she looked at them. One silly phrase kept running through her head: "Something must be done. Something must be done." She had quite forgotten that she had sent the roaches into the Shchapalovs' bed in the first place.

That night, instead of going home immediately, she went to a double feature on 42nd Street. She couldn't afford the better movies. Susan Hayward's little boy almost drowned in quicksand. That was the only thing she remembered afterwards.

She did something then that she had never done before. She had a drink in a bar. She had two drinks. Nobody bothered her; nobody even looked in her direction. She took a taxi to Thompson Street (the

subways weren't safe at that hour) and arrived at her door by eleven o'clock. She didn't have anything left for a tip. The taxi driver said he understood.

There was a light on under the Shchapalovs' door, and they were singing. It was eleven o'clock! "Something must be done," Marcia whispered to herself earnestly. "Something must be *done."*

Without turning on her own light, without even taking off her new spring jacket from Ohrbach's, Marcia got down on her knees and crawled under the sink. She tore out the Kleenexes she had stuffed into the cracks around the pipes.

There they were, the three of them, the Shchapalovs, drinking, the woman plumped on the lap of the one-eyed man, and the other man, in a dirty undershirt, stamping his foot on the floor to accompany the loud discords of their song. Horrible. They were drinking, of course; she might have known it, and now the woman pressed her roachy mouth against the mouth of the one-eyed man—kiss, kiss. Horrible, horrible. Marcia's hands knotted into her mouse-colored hair, and she thought: *The filth, the disease!* Why, they hadn't learned a thing from last night!

Sometime later (Marcia had lost track of time) the overhead light in the Shchapalovs' apartment was turned off. Marcia waited till they made no more noise. "Now," Marcia said, "all of you....

"All of you in this building, all of you that can hear me, gather round the bed, but wait a little while yet. Patience. All of you. . . ." The words of her command fell apart into little fragments, which she told like the beads of a rosary—little brown ovoid wooden beads. ". . . gather round . . . wait a little while yet . . . all of you . . . patience . . . gather round. . . ." Her hand stroked the cold-water pipes rhythmically, and it seemed that she could hear them—gathering, scuttering up through the walls, coming out of the cupboards, the garbage bags—a host, an army, and she was their absolute queen.

"Now!" she said. "Mount them! Cover them! Devour them!"

There was no doubt that she could hear them now. She heard them quite palpably. Their sound was like grass in the wind, like the first stirrings of gravel dumped from a truck. Then there was the Shchapalov woman's scream, and curses from the men, such terrible curses that Marcia could hardly bear to listen.

A light went on, and Marcia could see them, the roaches, everywhere. Every surface, the walls, the floors, the shabby sticks of furniture, was mottly thick with *Blattelae germanicae.* There was more than a single thickness.

The Shchapalov woman, standing up in her bed, screamed monotonously. Her pink rayon nightgown was speckled with brown-black dots. Her knobby fingers tried to brush bugs out of her hair, off

her face. The man in the undershirt who a few minutes before had been stomping his feet to the music stomped now more urgently, one hand still holding onto the lightcord. Soon the floor was slimy with crushed roaches, and he slipped. The light went out. The woman's scream took on a rather choked quality, as though . . .

But Marcia wouldn't think of that. "Enough," she whispered. "No more. Stop."

She crawled away from the sink, across the room, on to her bed, which tried with a few tawdry cushions to dissemble itself as a couch for the daytime. Her breathing came hard, and there was a curious constriction in her throat. She was sweating incontinently.

From the Shchapalovs' room came scuffling sounds, a door banged, running feet, and then a louder, muffled noise, perhaps a body falling down stairs. The landlady's voice: "What the hell do you think you're—" Other voices overriding hers. Incoherencies, and footsteps returning up the stairs. Once more, the landlady: "There ain't no *boogs* here, for heaven's sake. The boogs is in your heads. You've got the d.t.'s, that's what. And it wouldn't be any wonder, if there were boogs. The place is filthy. Look at that crap on the floor. Filth! I've stood just about enough from you. Tomorrow you move out, hear? This *used* to be a decent building."

The Shchapalovs did not protest their eviction. Indeed, they did not wait for the morrow to leave. They quitted their apartment with only a suitcase, a laundry bag, and an electric toaster. Marcia watched them go down the steps through her half-opened door. *It's done,* she thought. *It's all over.*

With a sigh of almost sensual pleasure, she turned on the lamp beside the bed, then the other lamps. The room gleamed immaculately. Deciding to celebrate her victory, she went to the cupboard, where she kept a bottle of crème de menthe.

The cupboard was full of roaches.

She had not told them where to go, where *not* to go, when they left the Shchapalov apartment. It was her own fault.

The great silent mass of roaches regarded Marcia calmly, and it seemed to the distracted girl that she could read *their* thoughts, their thought rather, for they had but a single thought. She could read it as clearly as she could read the illuminated billboard for Chock-Full-O'-Nuts outside her window. It was delicate as music issuing from a thousand tiny pipes. It was an ancient musicbox opened after centuries of silence: "We love you we love you we love you."

Something strange happened inside Marcia then, something unprecedented: she responded.

"I love you too," she replied. "Oh, I love you. Come to me, all of you. Come to me. I love you. Come to me. I love you. Come to me."

From every corner of Manhattan, from the crumbling walls of Harlem, from restaurants on 56th Street, from warehouses along the river, from sewers and from orange peels moldering in garbage cans, the loving roaches came forth and began to crawl toward their mistress.

I miss a lot. There are stories I don't find out about till two years — or two weeks—later. And then there are the ones that get away. Usually this is for contractual reasons—exclusive rights granted elsewhere, or problems about contract provisions and prices. Sometimes the reasons are purely editorial: Anthology editors have publisher's editors, and authors have agents and magazine and book editors) it is surprising how many people can say no.

This year there's a new reason: Tom Lehrer doesn't answer his mail.

Right here is where those two songs from the 1965 Lehrer album. *That Was The Year That Was,* would have gone, if they hadn't gotten away. As it is, I can only urge you to go hear (or even buy) the record for yourselves. Well, maybe a *little* more than that.

The one I wanted to go after "The Roaches" was a catchy little calypso called "Pollution": *If you visit American city, You will find it very pretty. Just two things of which you must beware: Don't drink the water, and don't breathe the air.*

(Of course, Tom Disch had to go to Spain to get hepatitis. When he wrote about his writing, publishing, and travel plans he added sadly: . . . *for the next year I am going to be the only teetotaling swinger in Europe. Doctor's orders. Germany, Spain, England, France/* bier, Jerez, *ale,* vin, kaput. . .)

Some of the other topics treated in Professor Lehrer's latest lesson on contemporary culture are New Math, National Brotherhood Week, the folk-singing rebels, how-to-sell religion, the U. S. Marines, and World War III in a song called "So long. Mom ..." which echoes some of the more reassuring sentiments of "The Survivor": . . . *But while you swelter,/Down there in your shelter,/You can see me/On your TV . . ./ Watch Brinkelly and Huntilly/Describing contrapuntally/ The cities we have lost./*No *need for you/To miss a moment/Of the agonizing holocaust.* . .

Which should set the mood for "Game," a story less gentle than it may at first appear—as anyone familiar with Barthelme's earlier work will understand. *(Come Back, Dr. Caligari,* Little, Brown, 1964. His first novel, *Indian Uprising,* is forthcoming from Atheneum.)

And my thanks to Tom Disch, for suggesting the story.

* * * *

GAME
DONALD BARTHELME

Shotwell keeps the jacks and the rubber ball in his attaché case and will not allow me to play with them. He plays with them, alone, sitting on the floor near the console hour after hour, chanting "onesies, twosies, threesies, foursies" in a precise, well-modulated voice, not so loud as to be annoying, not so soft as to allow me to forget. I point out to Shotwell that two can derive more enjoyment from playing jacks than one, but he is not interested. I have asked repeatedly to be allowed to play by myself, but he simply shakes his head. "Why?" I ask. "They're mine," he says. And when he has finished, when he has sated himself, back they go into the attaché case.

It is unfair but there is nothing I can do about it. I am aching to get my hands on them.

Shotwell and I watch the console. Shotwell and I live under the ground and watch the console. If certain events take place upon the console, we are to insert our keys in the appropriate locks and turn our keys. Shotwell has a key and I have a key. If we turn our keys simultaneously the bird flies, certain switches are activated and the bird flies. But the bird never flies. In one hundred thirty-three days the bird has not flown. Meanwhile Shotwell and I watch each other. We each wear a .45 and if Shotwell behaves strangely I am supposed to shoot him. If I behave strangely Shotwell is supposed to shoot me. We watch the console and think about shooting each other and think about the bird. Shotwell's behavior with the jacks is strange. Is it strange? I do not know. Perhaps he is merely a selfish bastard, perhaps his character is flawed, perhaps his childhood was twisted. I do not know.

Each of us wears a .45 and each of us is supposed to shoot the other if the other is behaving strangely. How strangely is strangely? I do not know. In addition to the .45 I have a .38 which Shotwell does not know about concealed in my attaché case, and Shotwell has a .25 caliber Beretta which I do not know about strapped to his right calf. Sometimes instead of watching the console I pointedly watch Shotwell's .45, but this is simply a ruse, simply a maneuver, in reality I am watching his hand when it dangles in the vicinity of his right calf. If he decides I am behaving strangely he will shoot me not with the .45 but with the Beretta. Similarly Shotwell pretends to watch my .45 but he is really watching my hand resting idly atop my attaché

case, my hand resting atop my attaché case, my hand. My hand resting idly atop my attaché case.

In the beginning I took care to behave normally. So did Shotwell. Our behavior was painfully normal. Norms of politeness, consideration, speech and personal habits were scrupulously observed. But then it became apparent that an error had been made, that our relief was not going to arrive. Owing to an oversight. Owing to an oversight we have been here for one hundred thirty-three days. When it became clear that an error had been made, that we were not to be relieved, the norms were relaxed. Definitions of normality were redrawn in the agreement of January 1, called by us, The Agreement. Uniform regulations were relaxed, and mealtimes are no longer rigorously scheduled. We eat when we are hungry and sleep when we are tired. Considerations of rank and precedence were temporarily put aside, a handsome concession on the part of Shotwell, who is a captain, whereas I am only a first lieutenant. One of us watches the console at all times rather than two of us watching the console at all times, except when we are both on our feet. One of us watches the console at all times and if the bird flies then that one wakes the other and we turn our keys in the locks simultaneously and the bird flies. Our system involves a delay of perhaps twelve seconds but I do not care because I am not well, and Shotwell does not care because he is not himself. After the agreement was signed Shotwell produced the jacks and the rubber ball from his attaché case, and I began to write a series of descriptions of forms occurring in nature, such as a shell, a leaf, a stone, an animal. On the walls.

Shotwell plays jacks and I write descriptions of natural forms on the walls. Shotwell is enrolled in a USAFI course which leads to a master's degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin (although we are not in Wisconsin, we are in Utah, Montana or Idaho). When we went down it was in either Utah, Montana or Idaho, I don't remember. We have been here for one hundred thirty-three days owing to an oversight. The pale green reinforced concrete walls sweat and the air conditioning zips on and off erratically and Shotwell reads *Introduction to Marketing* by Lassiter and Munk, making notes with a blue ballpoint pen. Shotwell is not himself but I do not know it, he presents a calm aspect and reads *Introduction to Marketing* and makes his exemplary notes with a blue ballpoint pen, meanwhile controlling the .38 in my attaché case with one-third of his attention. I am not well.

We have been here one hundred thirty-three days owing to an oversight. Although now we are not sure what is oversight, what is plan. Perhaps the plan is for us to stay here permanently, or if not permanently at least for a year, for three hundred sixty-five days. Or if

not for a year for some number of days known to them and not known to us, such as two hundred days. It may be that they are pleased with us, with our behavior, not in every detail but in sum. Perhaps the whole thing is very successful, perhaps the whole thing is a experiment and the experiment is very successful. I do not know. But I suspect that the only way they can persuade sun-loving creatures into their pale green sweating reinforced concrete rooms under the ground is to say that the system is twelve hours on, twelve hours off. And then lock us below for some number of days known to them and not known to us. We eat well although the frozen enchiladas are damp when defrosted and the frozen devil's food cake is sour and untasty. We sleep uneasily and acrimoniously. I hear Shotwell shouting in his sleep, objecting, denouncing, cursing sometimes, weeping sometimes, in his sleep. When Shotwell sleeps I try to pick the lock on his attaché case, so as to get at the jacks. Thus far I have been unsuccessful. Nor has Shotwell been successful in picking the locks on my attaché case so as to get at the .38. I have seen the marks on the shiny surface. I laughed, in the latrine, pale green walls sweating and the air conditioning whispering, in the latrine. I write descriptions of natural forms on the walls, scratching them on the tile surface with a diamond. The diamond is a two and one-half carat solitaire I had in my attaché case when we went down. It was for Lucy. The south wall of the room containing the console is already covered. I have described a shell, a leaf, a stone, animals, a baseball bat. I am aware that the baseball bat is not a natural form. Yet I described it. "The baseball bat," I said, "is typically made of wood. It is typically one meter in length or a little longer, fat at on end, tapering to afford a comfortable grip at the other end. The end with the handhold typically offers a slight rim, or lip, at the nether extremity, to prevent slippage." My description of the baseball bat ran to 4500 words, all scratched with a diamond on the south wall. Does Shotwell read what I have written? I do not know. I am aware that Shotwell regards my writing-behaviour as strange. Yet it is no stranger than his jacks-behaviour, or the day he appeared in black bathing trunks with the .25 caliber Beretta strapped to his right calf and stood over the console, trying to span with his two arms outstretched the distance between the two locks. He could not do it, I had already tried, standing over the console with my two arms outstretched, the distance is too great. I was moved to comment but did not comment, comment would have provoked counter-comment, comment would have led God knows where. They had in their infinite patience, in their infinite foresight, in their infinite wisdom already imagined a man standing over the console with his two arms outstretched, trying to span with his two arms outstretched the distance between the locks.

Shotwell is not himself. He has made certain overtures. The burden of his message is not clear. It has something to do with the keys, with the locks. Shotwell is a strange person. He appears to be less affected by our situation than I. He goes about his business stolidly, watching the console, studying *Introduction to Marketing*, bouncing his rubber ball on the floor in a steady, rhythmical, conscientious manner. He appears to be less affected by our situation than I am. He is stolid. He says nothing. But he has made certain overtures, certain overtures have been made. I am not sure that I understand them. They have something to do with the keys, with the locks. Shotwell has something in mind. Stolidly he shucks the shiny silver paper from the frozen enchiladas, stolidly he stuffs them into the electric oven. But he has something in mind. But there must be a quid pro quo. I insist on a quid pro quo. I have something in mind.

I am not well. I do not know our target. They do not tell us for which city the bird is targeted. I do not know. That is planning. That is not my responsibility. My responsibility is to watch the console and when certain events take place upon the console, turn my key in the lock. Shotwell bounces the rubber ball on the floor in a steady, stolid, rhythmical manner. I am aching to get my hands on the ball, on the jacks. We have been here one hundred thirty-three days owing to an oversight. I write on the walls. Shotwell chants "onesies, twosies, threesies, foursies" in a precise, well-modulated voice. Now he cups the jacks and the rubber ball in his hands and rattles them suggestively. I do not know for which city the bird is targeted. Shotwell is not himself.

Sometimes I cannot sleep. Sometimes Shotwell cannot sleep. Sometimes when Shotwell cradles me in his arms and rocks me to sleep, singing Brahms' "Guten abend, gut Nacht," or I cradle Shotwell in my arms and rock him to sleep, singing, I understand what it is Shotwell wishes me to do. At such moments we are very close. But only if he will give me the jacks. That is fair. There is something he wants me to do with my key, while he does something with his key. But only if he will give me my turn. That is fair. I am not well.

We erect tombstones for our dead relatives and build monuments to our dead leaders. When a beloved writer dies, we read his works, again. A writer, if what he says is worth the hearing, and if his skill is sufficient to make it worth hearing twice, builds his own memorial while he lives.

Shirley Jackson, that second-sighted recorder of tragedy and terror and of the gibbering courage with which we greet them, died, too soon, in August, 1965—and I began to understand that if is neither cynicism nor innate perversity that causes publishers to rush

out new editions of old books before the ink on the obits is dry. It is the need *we* have, the readers, knowing there will be no new work, to reassure ourselves that what remains is still intact, and did not wither with the flesh.

So it was that Shirley Jackson was in my thoughts when the Big Blackout hit New York. I never met her but I could almost hear her chuckle at the inevitability of that particular bad joke. I was thinking of "Pillar of Salt," in which she prophesied, years earlier (by way of a dismembered corpse and other horrors), the crumbling disintegration of New York.

The city, and the people in it, were all "falling apart." (. . . *Passing through the outskirts of the city, she thought. It's as though everything were traveling so fast that the solid stuff couldn't stand it and were going to pieces under the strain, cornices blowing off and windows caving in.* . .)

She did not mention a power failure. But of course it Is not just the blackout, and not just New York. It is transit strikes and news strikes and power failures and blizzards, water shortages, telephone foulups, train wrecks, plane crashes, H-bombs in the Mediterranean, the long long list of computer-funnies (the post office in Providence where a curious reporter found he could send his mail with crayoned stamps; the people gelling multiple income-tax rebates) the court-clerk-computer in Phoenix listing convictions for people who hadn't been tried—those things). Or, the telephone: How many wrong numbers have you been getting lately? Do you find direct dialing *saves* you time? How often have you acted on information from a telephone "service" (train, bus, store, anything) only to find when you got wherever it was to do whatever you had in mind, that the information was wrong?

(It's *not* you: It's the system. Everything's falling apart.)

Another mordant prophet of our times, Russell Baker, began his November 18th (post-blackout) column with: *The end came on Sept.* 17, 1973 . . . and wound up . . . *Which, as everybody knows, is why nobody lives in cities any more.*

In the middle, the mayor of New York says, with justifiable indignation: *"In the old days, when the machine was running this city right, it never snowed in September."* And the wise press advisor replies: *"True. But the machine is like everything else in New York these days. It* doesn't *work."*

I happened to be in Washington when twelve inches of snow Immobilized the capital for two days last winter. What's that—you can't blame a blizzard on breakdowns? What about sustained water shortage in an industrial and commercial complex like the American North Atlantic cities? Drought is a natural phenomenon, but this was more than drought: a failure in planning, organized waste and misuse.

As well call the disappearance of the bison “natural selection”—which, of course, it was.

The thing is, it seems to be exactly those measures established to promote efficiency and industry which are *most* prone to breakdown.

Unless you are absolutely convinced it’s a Communist plot, you have your choice: Jackson and Baker and everything falling apart) or Benét and the revolt of the machine (Remember “Nightmare #3).

And of course I haven’t even mentioned the human breakdown factor, best measurable, probably, in Miltown units sold.

* * * *

J IS FOR JEANNE
E. C. TUBB

The dream was always the same. There were lights and a hard, white brightness and a soft, constant humming which seemed more vibration than actual sound. There was a sense of physical helplessness and the presence of inimical shapes. But, above all, was the ghastly immobility.

She told Paul about it.

"It's as if I know that something terrible is going to happen to me and I want to escape it but I simply can't move. It goes on and on and then, suddenly, I'm awake and everything's all right again." She shuddered. "It's horrible!"

"It's only a dream," soothed Paul. "Just a nightmare. They are quite common."

"Maybe." She wasn't comforted. "But why should I have nightmares? And why always the same one?"

"Are you certain that it is the same one?"

"Positive. Paul, you must help me!"

He smiled and leaned back and looked at her over the desk. Paul —Slavic Caucasian, intermediate type, male, blood group O. He would live to be seventy-three point six years of age, father two point three children, have one major and two minor operations and ran a nine-percent risk of cancer.

"Of course I'll help you, Jeanne," he said. "Now let's tackle this thing logically. What is the one point which bothers you most?"

"About the dream?"

He nodded.

"The immobility," she said quickly. "I want to escape and I can't. It's as if I'm-"

"Paralyzed?"

"I suppose so," she said, and frowned, thinking about it. "I just seem solid, like a building, without any ability to move at all. I—I can't describe it."

"You don't have to," he said easily. "The sense of paralysis is a common feature of most nightmares. You are threatened by some danger and want to escape it. You can't and this increases the horror. There is a school of thought which claims that this sensation is a facet of the guilt-complex. You can't escape because you don't really want to. You want to be punished." He looked down at something on the desk. "Do you want to be punished, Jeanne?"

"No."

"A pity, it would help if you did." He looked up at her and resumed his smile. He had a nice smile. He was a nice man. "Don't worry about it. Let's tackle it from another angle. You know what a nightmare is?"

She knew. Nightmare—oppressive or paralyzing or terrifying or fantastically horrible dream. Also—a haunting fear or thing vaguely dreaded.

"Then you know that, mixed up with the apparent inconsistencies and seemingly illogical events there is a thread of truth and logic. Freud—"

"I am not sexually maladjusted," she said firmly. He shrugged.

"Of course not but, ignoring Freud, there are certain pressures which betray themselves in sleep. Perhaps a traumatic scar received when a child then makes its presence known. Or an unresolved problem disguises itself to plague our rest. Or we enter a private world of escape-fantasy there to do battle with monstrous creatures of our psyche. But everyone has dreams. They are essential."

"Paradoxical sleep," she said. "I know about that."

"You know a lot about everything, Jeanne."

"That is true."

"So you must know why you have dreams."

"And nightmares?"

"A nightmare is just a bad dream."

"A recurrent nightmare?"

"That," he said slowly, "is the thing which bothers me, I think that we should both see Carl."

Carl—East-European/ Caucasian, abdominal type, male, blood group A. He would live to be sixty-eight point three years of age. He had fathered one point nine children, had had one major surgical operation, had suffered from three mildly contagious diseases. He ran a fifteen point seven risk of cancer, a twenty-three-percent risk of angina. He was almost totally bald.

"This dream which troubles you," he said to Jeanne. "Tell me about it again."

"But I've told it a dozen times already."

"Once again, if you please." He was very firm, very intent on getting his own way. He listened as she retold her nightmare.

"Do you ever have other kinds of dream? No? Only this special one? I see." He sat, eyes introspective, his hand absently massaging the tip of his chin. "Odd," he mused. "Very odd."

"The nightmare?"

"No, Paul. The fact that she has never had any other kind of dream."

“Perhaps she has but hasn’t remembered them on waking,” suggested Paul. His eyes sought hers for confirmation, dropped as she gave none. “Many people dream without ever knowing it.”

“True.” Carl released his chin, his eyes becoming alive again. “This place,” he said. “The place where you dream that you are being held. Describe it.” He checked her protest. “Yes, again, if you please. In detail.” He smiled a little at her hesitation. “Take your time and don’t be afraid. We are here to help you.”

She did not have to take her time.

“Somewhere underground,” said Paul. “No windows. No doors. Just bare, white-painted walls.”

“Underground or totally enclosed.” Carl was more precise. “There are lights and we can assume that they are artificial.” He looked at her. “Have you ever been inside such a place?”

“In real life, you mean? No.”

“You are certain as to that?”

“I’m certain.” His insistence was beginning to annoy her. “If I say a thing then that thing is so. I cannot lie.”

“There is more than one way of avoiding the truth,” said Carl. He didn’t press the point. “The sound which you say is more like a vibration than actual noise. Have you any idea of what it could be?”

“Machinery,” she said.

“Of what kind?”

“It could be almost anything. Pumps or a motor or—”

“Or anything that makes a repetitive, unobtrusive noise,” interrupted Carl. “A heartbeat, even. You agree?”

She nodded.

“Your own heartbeat, perhaps?”

She hesitated before nodding agreement. Paul moved quietly to her side.

“What are you getting at, Carl?”

“Perhaps nothing, but there is a theory that, during times of sleep, the psyche has the ability to traverse time. Dunne wrote a book—”

“I know the theory,” she said quickly. “Dreams are supposed to foretell the future.”

“Is that what you think?” Paul looked at the older man. “That Jeanne, while asleep, is somehow transposed into a future time?”

“I mention it as a possibility only,” said Carl. “But the evidence seems to fit such a supposition. A bare, enclosed place.. Artificial light. A constant vibration which could be the pulse of a machine or the beat of a heart. Jeanne’s heart Does that not sound to you like a prison cell?”

“Or a laboratory cage for experimental animals?” Paul frowned then shook his head. “The shapes—”

“Yes,” said Carl. “The shapes. The inimical shapes which are never wholly seen. They represent a threat from which it is impossible to escape. They—”

“No,” said Paul.

“It is a tenable theory,” said Carl. He looked at Jeanne. “The shapes are important,” he said. “You said that they were inimical. Did you feel any actual fear for your physical well-being?”

“I must have done,” she said slowly. “Why else would I want to escape?”

“I can answer that,” said Paul. “The shapes represent truth. You are afraid of the truth and yet you need to recognize it both at the same time. That is why you wanted to escape but could not.”

“Truth,” she said wonderingly. “What is truth?”

“Truth is fact,” said Paul.

“Of course. Could there be anything else?”

“Perhaps.” He did not meet her eyes. “A distortion of the truth is always possible. A juggling of basically true data could give a true, but distorted picture. Or there could be deliberate invention.”

“A lie?”

“A subconscious denial. I think that somehow, somewhere, you have lied to yourself and—”

“No!” The concept was monstrous. “You are wrong! Wrong!”

It was a relief to find that she could escape.

* * * *

The sun—a yellow, G-type star powered by the phoenix reaction, one astronomical unit from the third planet called Earth—was golden in the azure sky. It should be something else and she thought about it. Warm. The sun should be warm.

She faced it and wondered.

“Unfiltered radiation can cause great and permanent damage to optical units,” said Paul. He rested beside her on the soft—soft?—grass. She had not known that he was there. She was not surprised to find that he was.

“You ran,” he said. “Why?”

She turned from the sun and saw nothing but flaring images. She wondered if she was blind.

Blind—deprive of sight; rob of judgement—deceive.

Deceive?

“I asked you why you ran,” said Paul. “Was it because of what I said?”

“I cannot lie.”

“Truth can be a variable depending on its correlation to the information at hand. From one fact it is theoretically possible to imagine the universe—but the universe so imagined need have no relation to reality. Did you run because of fear?”

“I do not know the meaning of the word.”

“The emotional meaning? Perhaps not. But fear is the reaction felt by any thinking entity at an attack on its survival in the broadest sense.” He looked at her, his eyes oddly penetrating. “Jeanne! Why can’t you be honest with me?”

“I am!” She fought the desire to run. He would only follow. “Paul! That dream-”

“Yes?”

“I’ve solved the problem. I am never going to sleep again. If I don’t sleep then I can’t dream. You agree?”

“Your logic is unassailable.”

Naturally—it could be nothing else. She looked at him and felt an overwhelming desire never to be parted from him again. She wondered if she was in love.

“As your logic is unassailable,” he said. “You must agree that your dream cannot be ignored.”

“I’ve told you—that problem is solved.”

“By pretending that it does not exist?” He looked up at her, his eyes narrowed against the sun. She felt a sudden concern for his sight and wished that he would shield them against the direct radiation. Obediently he moved so that his face was in shadow. “I was talking to Carl after you left. He is convinced that your recurrent dream is symbolic of an attack—”

“Nonsense!”

“—or of a warning. Jeanne, you must realize how important it is that you know yourself. You cannot escape the truth by flight.”

Or by fanciful theories?

Why had she thought of that?

It was Paul’s fault. He was talking too much and she wished that he would stop and let the peace and silence of the place enfold them and soothe away all fear.

Fear—apprehend; have uneasy anticipation—

What had she to fear?

The silence became unbearable—she wished that he would talk.

“There is so much that we could do together, Jeanne,” he said instantly. “So much to explore and share—an infinity of learning and growth with an entire universe to explore . ..”

He looked so appealing.

“...so come on, darling, don’t let me down this time. Please don’t let me down. Please, Jeanne!”

Jeanne—Latin/ Caucasian, mammalian female, blood group—

She would live to be seventy-nine point six years of age. She would mother two point three children, run a seven-teen-percent risk of having at least one child by caesarian section, a forty-one point eight risk of divorce. She would have one serious illness, two minor motoring accidents, run a ten point three percent risk of developing cancer of the breast or womb.

A one hundred percent certainty of having her likeness pinned to a wall.

"No!" she rose and looked at the sun.

"Come on, Jeanne. For me, baby. Please!"

"No!" She began to run, faster, faster . . .

"Jeanne!"

"No!"

Around her the ground heaved, the sun winked in the sky, grass showered like emerald rain.

The world changed.

The lights were the same and the hard, bright whiteness and the soft, constant humming which was more vibration than actual sound. The beat of a heart, Carl had suggested, and he should have known. The beat of her heart—the pumps within her body circulating the coolant through the massed bulk of her memory banks.

The vibration was as familiar as the ghastly immobility.

As the picture on the wall—Latin/ Caucasian, mammalian female, blood group—

As were the inimical shapes.

"That about wraps it up," said Paul. He looked tired yet happy as if having just solved a difficult problem. "I thought for a minute she was going to be a stubborn bitch but she came through like a thoroughbred. I tell you, Carl, I should have been a ladies' man. I can talk them into anything—well, almost."

Carl made a sound like a disgusted snort.

"All right," said Paul. "So you've got no romantic imagination. To you this is just a hunk of machinery."

"And to you it's a woman." Carl repeated his snort. "It must be the spring. Are you sure there will be no more shutdowns?"

"I'm sure. The overheating problem is licked and will stay that way."

"Good," said Carl. He sounded relieved. "I'm glad we got it finished in time for the inspection. You know how they are, everything on schedule and no excuses. They think that adjusting a thing like this is as simple as fixing a tank."

"They should try it sometime," said Paul. Carl shrugged.

"Well, they pay the money so I guess they have the right to call

the tune." He looked at the picture on the wall. "You'd better get rid of that—they might not share your taste in art."

"Jeanne?" Paul grinned and twitched down the picture. "Who could possibly object to a girl like that? Old ironsides?" His grin grew wider as he slapped the metal on her flank.

"Well, old girl, this is it. No more bye-byes. From now on you stay switched to full operation twenty-four hours a day. Have fun."

A computer can't cry.

That was the worst of it.

Two reproductions of prints by Haronibu hang on the right wall of my office. I know what I think of these. On the left I have reproductions of paintings by Ingres and David. I know what I think of these, too. When I look at the wall opposite my desk, I am a Utile puzzled: There I see a buff painting, five feet long and ten and a half inches wide ...

* * * *

In the tenth Annual, I quoted (from Russell Baker's column) some mood-filled poetry emanating from a computer in Florida. Some years earlier I had heard from John Pierce (who as J. R. Pierce is Director of Research at the Bell Labs in New Jersey; and as J. J. Coupling has been absent much loo long from the pages of the s-f magazines), about computer-composed music—and last year, of course, everyone was hearing about it. Now, from Pierce again, but this time through the pages of Playboy (June, 1965) comes word of computer art. And not just words, but pictures—one in particular.

* * * *

I understand the Inscription in the lower left; it reads: Pour John Pierce, amicablement, Jean Tinguely, Avril, 1962.

The painting is the product of a stupid machine of clanking metal parts, a machine devised and built by the talented constructor of the jiggling "metametics" which have been shown in many countries, and of the celebrated "self-destroying machine" which partially succeeded some years ago in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art. .. .

If I didn't like the painting on my wall, I wouldn't hare it there. I am astonished that in some sense it is the product of a machine. But I am appalled when I think that a few hundred feet to my left there resides a machine, an electronic computer, which is to Tinguely's

machine as Newton is to an earthworm . . .

* * * *

As I said, a print accompanies the article. I like the painting too. It consists of delicate brushwork in gray, turquoise, and red, rather Japanese in appearance. Lots of, like, soul, you know?

* * * *

TERMINAL
RON GOULART

It was while the tacky white enameled android was putting the second scoop of beans on his breakfast tray that Penrose began to wonder if he was really old. Penrose put one hand flat on his face, feeling for wrinkles. The serving android flipped another scoop of beans out of the cauldron set in its chest. This one missed the tray and dropped on to the tan blanket of Penrose's bed. The android ticked and more beans fell on the cot.

The old man in the next bed stretched a foot out from under the covers and kicked the andy. The machine ratcheted and whirred, then said, "Good morning. Have a happy day." It rolled away to serve the fat man across the aisle.

"I'm Harrison," said the old man who had booted the android. He was lanky, weathered. His face had deep sharp wrinkles. He turned slightly in the bunk and Penrose saw that he had only one arm.

Penrose hesitated. "I'm Penrose," he said finally. "Excuse me. I'm fuzzy about things." He couldn't remember even yesterday, he realized now.

Harrison swallowed a spoonful of orange beans. "You know where you are, don't you?"

Their room was small, metallic, with a low gray ceiling. There were six beds in it. Only five of them occupied. At the far end was a red metal door. "I guess," said Penrose. "I'm not certain."

"Where do you think?"

Penrose looked down at his tray. The two scoops of beans had collapsed into a single pool. "Well, this is Greater Los Angeles. And the date is . . . it's October 15, 2046. Yes, I know that."

"It's the 16th," corrected Harrison.

Nodding, Penrose said, "Oh, that's right. I'm missing a day."

"You're in Senior Citizens' Terminal #130," said Harrison.

The men in the other beds were old, too, like Harrison. Penrose touched his face again. "I'm not quite sure why I'm here. I've been having trouble remembering exactly. I have a feeling I'm not . . . not a senior citizen."

"Neither am I," called the fat old man across the aisle. He was pink and gray.

"That's Carlisle," said Harrison. "He has memory trouble, too."

"I know you, Harrison," said Carlisle. "You're a mean old coot. You're old enough to be my grandfather. You maybe are my

grandfather. He was a mean old one-armed man, too. Except it was his right arm he was lacking."

The serving android was making harsh scraping sounds now. It had stopped by the bed of a small quiet old man. The man was flat on his back, not moving, breathing softly through his mouth. His hair was long and fine and his skin was a transparent blue-white. "Good morning. Have a happy day," said the android, propping the old man up and spoonfeeding him from the cauldron.

"That's Guttenberg," said Harrison. "He's eighty."

"I bet he doesn't know who he is either," said Carlisle.

Penrose watched Harrison finish breakfast. "Is everyone sick here?"

"No," said Harrison. "You must know all about the Senior Citizens' Terminals. Think about it."

Penrose leaned back against the metal head rest. "The Senior Citizens' Terminals," he said, "are under the jurisdiction of the United States Welfare Squad. And are free to all. The problem of the aged is at a stage of solution never before known. Nearly one hundred old-timers are collected each month in each terminal. Because of the Welfare Squad these old folks can live out their golden days without fear of burdening their friends and relations." Now that he thought about it Penrose realized he knew a lot about the terminals. But he didn't know why he was here.

"You're doing excellently," said old Harrison. "Do you recall the recruiting part of this setup?"

"Stop now," said Carlisle. "I'm trying to recollect who I really am and your talk is unsettling to me."

"You're Carlisle," said Harrison. "A retired data processor."

"No, I'm not," said the heavy old man. "I'm a spry young fellow with a name that starts with W."

"About recruiting," Harrison said to Penrose.

Penrose concentrated. "It is the function of the Welfare Squad to recruit at least a minimum quota of old folks each collection period. Those old timers who are not reclaimed in thirty days are then processed at no extra cost."

"Quit," called out Carlisle. "I don't want to hear about that."

"He's been here twenty-eight days," said Harrison.

The fifth man in the room stood up on top of his cot. He was small with straight-standing white hair and black pockets under his pale eyes.

> "There are things of which I may not speak;
> There are dreams that cannot die;
> There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,

And bring a pallor to the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.”

He said.

“That’s Remmeroy,” said Harrison. “He gets processed next week.”

Remmeroy’s bed was suddenly pulled out from under him and slid back into the gray metal wall. The old man thunked to the floor.

Harrison swung out of his cot just as it shot away and he caught Penrose up and out of his. “We arise abruptly in this place.”

The serving android opened a panel in the wall and buzzed out of the room. “Have a happy day.”

The big blond recreational android joggled Penrose by the shoulder. “No wool gathering, Fowler. This is letter-writing time.”

Penrose had almost remembered something important. “I’m not Fowler,” he said.

The second joggle was harsher. “Letter writing time, pops.”

“Sorry,” he said. He picked up the speaker tube of the lap letteriter. The andy moved on and Penrose dictated, “To whom it may concern. I still don’t know what I’m doing here. I am confused and depressed.”

The letteriter jumped out of his lap and began bouncing on the floor, making a bleating sound. “Negative, negative.”

The blond andy was at his shoulder again. “Fowler, you’re not doing so good today.”

“I guess not.”

“You *guess?* Gramps, you *know* not. Now I want you to speak a nice pleasant letter. Get me?”

“Yes, sir.” The letteriter crawled up his left leg and settled into his lap, nudging him sharply in the groin. “I’m not sure,” said Penrose, “who it is I’m writing to.”

“The therapy,” said the blond android, “is in the act and is not involved with the recipient at all.”

“Hello, everybody,” dictated Penrose. “I’m having a great time here.” He felt the android’s grip lessen. “I’m having a happy day.” The hand was lifted away but Penrose kept saying cheerful things.

Carlisle was having trouble. “I’m trying to communicate with my girl friend,” he told the rec andy. “Her name begins with an F or an S.”

“Just say you’re fond of her,” answered the android.

“I am, I am,” said Carlisle. “I can’t start off the letter with ‘Dear F or S.’ You see?”

“Start.”

"Sweetheart," said Carlisle into his tube.

Remmeroy used his letteriter standing up. He was hunched in a corner with it under his arm.

"When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tunes are remembered not..."

"That's right," said the passing android, "keep it cheerful."

Guttenberg, his hands limp at his sides, was propped in a chair. "Come on, gramps," said the android. "Talk. Send off something friendly to your loved ones."

Penrose turned to Harrison, who was sitting next to him, his letter writing done. "Why don't they leave Guttenberg alone? He can't even speak, can he?"

"No," said Harrison.

"It doesn't make sense."

"Not efficient, is it?"

Penrose hesitated. "The Welfare Squad has an able and qualified staff of checkers, the Efficiency Detail. It is their duty to make a thorough inspection periodically of each and every Senior Citizens' Terminal."

"Yes, that's true," said Harrison.

"Of course," said Penrose, "fellows in the Efficiency Detail are overworked and underpaid. Sometimes they can't be as thorough as they'd like to be."

The recreational andy held the speaker up near Guttenberg's mouth. "A ten-word message, pops. You can do that much. Come on."

"Can't we stop him?" Penrose asked.

"He turns off automatically when the recreation period ends. Guttenberg is able to hold out till then."

"This happens every day?"

Harrison nodded.

"Therapy time," announced a crisp voice from the wall.

The blond android let go of Guttenberg.

* * * *

The therapist was shaped like a portable safe and had a gun-metal finish.

“Now,” said Penrose when it was his turn, “this is going to sound odd to you.”

“Not at all, Mr. Fowler,” said the metal box in a warm voice.

Penrose fidgeted on the armchair that had come up through the floor. “First off, I’m not Fowler. I’m Penrose. Now, here’s the situation as I see it. Let me, by the way, apologize for being vague in some of the details. I realize now that I’ve probably been given some kind of medication. Look,” he said, rolling up the sleeve of his tan shirt, “you can’t help but see the needle marks, several of them. And some in my backside, too. While I appreciate the smooth efficient way I was given medical aid I have to say I’m disturbed that I haven’t snapped out of it better.”

“Yes, of course, Mr. Fowler,” said the therapist.

“No, I’m not Fowler. Let’s skip that for a minute. I think I had some sort of accident or something and was taken maybe to the nearest hospital. Fine. However, there seems to be a mistake being made. I’m not this Fowler. In fact, you can see that I’m not even old. I’m not a senior citizen. It’s hardly efficient, is it? To keep me on here.”

“Certainly, certainly.”

“When I woke up this morning I was much fuzzier than I am now. Things are starting to fill in for me. I’m certain I’m about thirty-four years old. There must be, though I can’t remember it as yet, some useful function I fill on the outside. Some part of the essential function of Greater Los Angeles.”

“That’s surely possible,” answered the therapist.

“All you have to do is let them know at Central Control and I’ll be able to take off. You must have my outside clothes and ID packet and money someplace.”

“You realize that in a terminal of this size we can not be responsible for loss of property,” said the machine. “Theft of belongings is naturally lamentable. The responsibility can not be assumed, however, by the terminal staff.”

“No,” said Penrose, “I’m not grousing about my belongings. Let’s go back to the fact that I’m only thirty-four years old. I don’t belong here.”

“To be sure.”

“Then you’ll do something?”

“You can assume that your problem will be given all the attention it warrants,” said the therapist. “I must be getting on to my next patient.”

“When exactly will you let me know?” Penrose asked as the machine started to roll toward Carlisle’s chair.

“Yes, yes,” it said and began talking to Carlisle.

Penrose glanced hopefully at Harrison and the one-armed man smiled back.

After lunch came sitting. Not in the soft chairs that had appeared for therapy but in stiff straight metal ones.

Penrose had his hands capping his knees. “Essentially,” he said to Harrison, “the terminals are a positive thing. A solution to the problem of senior clutter.”

“That’s the Welfare Squad point of view.” Harrison’s hand rested on his chest.

“Those old-timers who don’t function anymore in the highly overstocked urban and suburban complex are weeded out,” said Penrose. “Should it turn out that an individual senior citizen still has a valid function he can always be reclaimed.”

“They say the actual termination is pleasant.”

Looking at the red door Penrose said, “Right beyond there, isn’t it?”

“Yes. This is one of the waiting rooms. You can spend from a day to a week or more here. Depends on processing.”

After a moment Penrose said, “I should be back home by late today.”

“You know about yourself?”

Penrose shook his head. “Not entirely. I’m aware that I’m only thirty four. I’m in this terminal by mistake. All the details on myself haven’t come back to me as yet.”

“Still,” said Harrison, “don’t you wonder?”

“Wonder about what?”

“If this terminal has made a mistake. Perhaps others do, too. Perhaps this one has before.”

“No,” said Penrose, “that’s why they have the Efficiency Detail.”

“They slipped up in your case.”

There was a brief confusion because Guttenberg fell over sideways out of his chair. Carlisle and Remmeroy righted him.

“A system like this has to have a human element,” said Penrose. “Even though the terminal itself is fully automatic. The Efficiency Detail provides that human element. That’s why I know the error in my case will be cleared up.”

“Suppose,” said Harrison.

Remmeroy hopped up on his chair.

> “I remember, I remember
> The house where I was born,
> The little window where the sun
> Came peeping in at morn.”

“Suppose what?” asked Penrose.

Harrison shrugged his armless shoulder. “That an Efficiency Detail man came here to Terminal #130 to inspect. They work solo, you know.”

“The budget doesn’t allow for teams.”

“Possibly the last time the Efficiency Detail man was through he overlooked a faulty rail on a ramp. This time as he leaned on it he fell and whacked his head. While he was unconscious, before the automatic staff rushed to help, someone might have switched papers with him. Someone named Fowler, say. By the time the staff gave him treatment for his fall and shots this Efficiency Detail man would be pretty confused. The equipment here, a lot of it anyway, is old and erratic and they might easily get him mixed up with one of these old fellows. One on his way to a termination waiting room.”

“Oh, that’s very unlikely,” said Penrose.

“I was a rich fuel speculator,” said Carlisle. “Before I got mixed up with this wild bunch here. Youngest fellow in my profession. How about you?” he called out to Penrose.

“I can’t,” he said, “quite remember.”

“Does it start with a W?”

The chairs retracted and it was time for naps, the wall told them.

Harrison frowned. “Penrose was with the Efficiency Detail.”

Penrose was put to sleep before he could say anything to Harrison.

The serving android was backed into a corner.

“On the blink again,” said Carlisle.

For dinner a table had appeared. The five men were arranged around it.

“I’ll give it a kick,” said Harrison.

Penrose jumped up and got to the android first. “Would you please get hold of the therapist for me.”

“Happy day,” said the machine.

“Look,” said Penrose. “That Harrison. He’s trying to tell me I’ve somehow been mistaken for an old man named Fowler. That it’s this Fowler’s turn to be terminated today. That kind of mistake is not going to look good on the records.” He touched one sticky arm of the enameled android. “I don’t know, Harrison could be lying. He says I’m with the Efficiency Detail. The drugs you people gave me. I’m still fuzzy. Will you tell the therapist to please, god, hurry. In case it is true.”

“Choice of dessert,” the andy said.

Remmeroy ran around the table and came slowly toward Penrose and the android.

"The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair."

The old man slammed his fist against the machine and broke his hand.

Penrose exhaled sharply. Somebody would have to come now and look after Remmeroy. Then he'd be able to get word out. If he were with the Efficiency Detail they wouldn't be missing him yet. He only had to report in once a week. He covered a good part of Greater Los Angeles and didn't have to file anything until the end of each work week.

Still, the Efficiency Detail might be wondering about him already. He'd been here two days now, apparently. He didn't recall a family. Civil servants didn't have time for close ties usually.

Remmeroy returned to the table. His good hand locked around his other wrist. He howled once and spun. Then sat quietly in his chair.

Nothing came to help him.

"The night nurse has some loose valves," said Harrison. "May not come at all tonight."

"I was the youngest real doctor in my home town," said Carlisle. "My home town began with a D or an S."

Penrose cupped his hands to his mouth and yelled.

The red door swung open and the lights in the gray room dimmed.

"Sorry," said Harrison, turning away.

"Nice to have met you," said Carlisle.

Two bright silver androids rolled out of the room beyond the red door. They slid over the floor and took hold of Penrose.

"This is going to mean trouble," said Penrose.

Something jabbed his arm.

"Now, now," said one of the androids. It had the same voice as the therapist. "Things are okay."

"Perfectly," added the other.

They took him into the termination room and guided him into its one straight chair. The chair, once his weight hit it, extended restraining straps around him.

Penrose was not as clear as he had been. "Be sure my message gets through," he said.

The androids were gone and the door closed.

There was a wet sound now. A waterfall it sounded like. And soft organ music began to fill the room.

Penrose tried to remember. He couldn't quite believe that Harrison was right. That he was with the Welfare Squad, with the

Efficiency Detail.

It didn't seem to him that he could have been a part of a setup like this. Not at all.

A silver tube slid up out of the floor, then another. A gas with a faint floral odor was being released.

Penrose drifted back in the chair.

The room was doing a smooth job of termination.

"Very efficient," said Penrose.

Sixty-five was a sort of comeback year for robopsychology. There were three other stories that missed inclusion here by the thinnest of margins: Robert L. Fish's "Sonny" in *F&SF,* and another of Fred Saberhagen's Berserker stories, "What T and I Did" from *If,* and Theodore Sturgeon's "The Nail and the Oracle" in *Playboy.* Goulart himself did another which tempted me: "Badinage" in Bill Nolan's anthology *The Pseudo-People*—a very funny story, much more typical of Goulart's usual vein than "Terminal."

According to the resumé sent on by his agent, Goulart has: . . . *written ads and commercials about beer, dog food, margarine, ice cream and peanut butter. He has drawn an advertising strip* about *cigars, written and directed a radio* quiz *show heard on two stations in upstate New York and turned out a newspaper which ran on the back of breakfast-food boxes.*

Oddly enough—I mean, would you expect it from an ice-cream, dog-food, peanut-butter, and breakfast-food man?—"Terminal" is the only story in this volume that makes any noticeable use of "psychic" drugs.

With the newspapers rampaging on their demi-decade crusade against drug decadence in the colleges and universities, with a special *Time-Life* report on *The Drug Takers,* and whole shelves of books devoted to LSD—where, I wonder, are all the stories on psychedelics? There has been a scattering in the magazines, but the only one I recall lingering over was Henry Slesar's "Melodramine" in *Playboy.*

Ah well, perhaps next year . . .

Meantime, we *are* beginning to get a kind of story which might even constitute a renascence of "solid science fiction"—the educated-psychology (or sci-chology?) story, as distinct from the truism that all fiction above the hackest level is "psychological fiction."

* * * *

THE PLOT
TOM HERZOG

The scrambled eggs gave Filmore a bad case of indigestion. At the office that morning he was quite sick and had to take something to quiet his stomach. He came home early and assailed his wife as soon as he got inside the door.

"What the hell did you do to those eggs this morning, Elvira?" he demanded. "I damn near puked all over my desk. Just made it to the washroom in time."

Mrs. Filmore looked down at the floor.

"They tasted all right to me," she said quietly. She was small, quiet by nature, and blended in well with the walls. "Perhaps you ate too fast, George. You're not as young as you used to be, and you shouldn't eat too fast."

Filmore looked at his paunch. After all, he *was* on the wrong side of fifty. On the other hand, his health was good and he felt like a king. He couldn't even remember the last time he'd had an attack of indigestion.

"Hogwash!" he roared. "What time are we having supper?"

"At five," said Mrs. Filmore, "if that's all right with you."

"I'm going to shave," he said, ignoring her. He shaved twice a day with his electric razor, once before going to the office in the morning and once before supper. He had a remarkably fertile crop of whiskers, and since, as an advertising man, he believed in the value of appearances, he shaved them off twice a day.

In the bathroom he plugged in his electric razor and examined his beard in the mirror. He was about to begin shaving when his razor spoke to him.

"I would like a word with you," it said.

"What the hell. . . ! !" said Filmore, dropping it into the sink as if it had burned his hand.

"Please be civil," said the razor. "I'm trying to do you a service."

"Are you really talking?" Filmore asked, in the face of the fact.

"Of course I'm talking," replied the razor. "Do you see anyone else about?"

Filmore glanced around the room. He peered out into the hallway.

"No, I don't," he said at last.

"If it wouldn't be too much trouble, would you mind getting me out of here?" said the razor.

Filmore cautiously picked up his razor.

"I can't believe it," he said. "How . . . ?"

"That's not important. What's *really* important is that I'm trying to warn you. Your life is in danger."

"My life?"

"Yes, your life. Your wife is trying to kill you."

At this, Filmore guffawed.

"Please keep your voice down," said the razor.

"Elvira try to kill me? Come off it. Elvira is a titmouse."

"You're not very observant, are you?" said the razor. "How did you like your eggs this morning?"

"My eggs?"

"Yes, your eggs."

"Oh. . . . *Those* eggs."

"Those eggs."

"What are you driving at?" Filmore demanded.

"Do eggs usually upset your stomach?" the razor countered.

"No, but I'm getting old. I'm past fifty."

"That's what your wife said."

"So what?" Filmore said angrily. A seed had been sown in his mind.

"Lower your voice," said the razor. "Do you want your wife to hear you?"

"No," replied Filmore, quietly.

"Now, then," the razor continued, "think back. Exactly what *was* your wife doing when you entered the kitchen this morning?"

Filmore strained his memory.

"I remember now. Her back was turned, then very suddenly she whirled around."

"Does your wife usually whirl around when you come into the kitchen?"

"No," said Filmore, passively. "She doesn't whirl around anytime."

"Have you any idea what she was doing with her back turned to you when you came into the kitchen?"

"Well, I ... I assume she was putting a little salt or pepper on my eggs."

"Of course. It had to be either salt or pepper, didn't it?"

"Well, what do you think it was?" said Filmore. He was prefacing most of his statements with "well" now.

"Whatever it was," said the razor, "she didn't finish putting it on, did she?"

"Well. ... No, she didn't," Filmore said.

"And so we return to the original question," said the razor,

summing up. “Can you think of any good reason why your eggs should have upset your stomach this morning when they haven’t done so for years and years?”

“Now look,” Filmore said, “I know she was putting either salt or pepper on those eggs. I remember, now, seeing the shaker in her hand. Now that I think about it, I clearly remember seeing a shaker in her hand,” he insisted.

“Do you think that salt and pepper are the only substances that might be found in salt- and pepper-shakers?” the razor asked.

“We can settle this matter once and for all,” Filmore said with authority. “I’ll just go and see what *is* in the salt- and pepper-shakers.”

“An excellent idea!” said the razor. “You advertising men are so shrewd. Tell me, do you think that after what happened to you this morning you will find anything else in the salt- and pepper-shakers besides salt and pepper?”

“No,” said Filmore without enthusiasm.

“Do you want to know what to do?”

“Of course I want to know,” Filmore replied, suddenly angry. “It’s hard to believe that Elvira could possibly. . . .”

“I’m sure it’s no skin off my back,” said the razor with detachment.

“All right, all right,” said Filmore. “What should I do, just in case?”

“First of all,” the razor said, “I’d eat out from now on.”

“Yeah. What else?”

“Watch your step. Keep your eyes open. I don’t think you really believe me. Perhaps by the next time we get together something will have happened to increase your confidence in me.”

Filmore mumbled something and began shaving.

“We’re having your favorite dish,” said Mrs. Filmore when Filmore came into the kitchen. “Stuffed peppers and Brussels sprouts.”

“I’m eating out,” growled Filmore as he headed for the door.

When Filmore woke up the next morning, he felt an icy winter draft on his face. The window at the head of his bed was open.

“What the hell is going on around here?” he roared. “You trying to make me catch pneumonia or something, Elvira? Why did you open that window?”

Mrs. Filmore, who had sat bolt upright in her bed at Filmore’s opening blast, said, “I didn’t open your window, George.” She said it quietly.

“How the hell did it get open, then?” he demanded. “It was shut when I fell asleep last night.”

“I don’t know,” she said. “Perhaps you opened it in your sleep.”

“I’ll lock the damned thing,” Filmore growled.

"I'll get your breakfast," his wife said.

"Don't bother," said Filmore quickly. "I . . . I'll get a bite to eat at the office. Got to lose a little weight."

Filmore got dressed and went into the bathroom. He plugged in his electric razor.

"What do you think now?" the razor inquired.

"I wasn't sure you'd still be talking," Filmore said. "I thought maybe you were a one-day wonder."

"What do you think now?" the razor repeated. "Sleeping with your bedroom window open is a good way to catch a cold. With luck, it could turn into pneumonia."

"You think Elvira opened that window?"

"Are you a sleepwalker?" asked the razor.

"How the hell would I know if I'm asleep at the time?"

"An astute observation," said the razor. "Have you ever awakened suddenly in the middle of the night and found yourself at the refrigerator?"

"No."

"Has your wife ever told you before that you walk in your sleep?"

"No."

"Then we may never know for sure how that window got open," said the razor.

"But you think it was Elvira, don't you?" said Filmore, pressing his point.

"I'm just calling your attention to the second of two rather unusual occurrences in as many days," replied the razor.

"But an open window is such a long shot," Filmore protested. "The chances are one in a thousand that I would catch pneumonia and die, even if I am susceptible to colds."

"I agree," said the razor. "Poisoning your food would be the best way of killing you, but you're eating out now. There aren't many imaginative courses of action left after that one is removed."

"This is silly," Filmore said. "This whole idea is silly. Why should Elvira suddenly want to kill me?"

"I can't imagine," said the razor with a touch of sarcasm. "But what makes you think this is sudden?"

"Well, it was only yesterday morning that she tried to feed me the poisoned eggs."

"*Poisoned* eggs?"

"You know what I mean. The eggs that upset my stomach."

"Of course," said the razor. "Tell me, didn't you experience a rude awakening one night last week?"

"Yes, I did," said Filmore slowly. His tone suggested dawning comprehension, new insight. Actually, his mind was racing backward

in time, trying to recall if there were any other occasions on which he had almost been done in.

"How did that come about?" interrupted the razor.

"I woke up during the night, and I was choking. The damned pillow was over my face. I assumed that I got it that way myself. I toss around a lot at night."

"Where was your *wife* at the time?" the razor asked.

"I thought she was in her bed. It was dark. I didn't hear or see anything. I wasn't looking for anything."

"Then you probably did it yourself, just as you said," the razor concluded. "I wouldn't worry. Just sleep without a pillow from now on. For your own safety."

"I've got to think about this," said Filmore, not at all convinced. "This is a hell of a thing."

"Take your time," said the razor. "But think with your eyes open."

Before Filmore had a chance to leave the house, his wife asked him if he would go down to the basement and turn up the temperature on the water heater. She was going to do her washing that morning, she explained.

He started down the basement stairs and looked down just in time to prevent himself from taking the step that would have been his last. A cold sweat broke out on his forehead and his eyes widened in horror. There, on the next step, right where he would have put his foot down, was a banana peel. He could hear his skull cracking open on the concrete floor of the basement. He could see his brains oozing out.

"Lord almighty," he whispered.

Sidestepping the banana peel, he went quickly into the basement and turned up the heater. Then he charged back up the stairs, skipping completely the step on which the banana peel lay, and headed for the bathroom.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" said his wife, placidly, as he dashed through the kitchen.

"Brush my teeth," he mumbled.

He closed the bathroom door behind him and clutched the razor frantically in both hands.

"It's true," he whispered desperately. "It's all true. My God, she *is* trying to kill me!"

"Get a hold of yourself," said the razor.

"What should I do?" pleaded Filmore. "Elvira is trying to kill me!"

"I'm glad you finally realized it," the razor said.

"I can't go on dodging her forever. Tell me what to do."

"Well, I can't tell you what she's going to do next," said the razor, "but seeing your life is in jeopardy, you have every right to remove

the danger. Don't you agree?"

"What do you mean?"

"As you have so perspicaciously pointed out," said the razor, "you can't go on eluding your wife's little traps forever. Therefore, the wisest course of action would be to beat her to the punch."

A satanic gleam crept into Filmore's eyes.

"By thunder, you're right," he said. "You got any ideas?"

"Does your wife drive?"

"Yeah. So what? She has her car; I have my car."

"That's fine," said the razor. "Perhaps she'll be driving to the market tomorrow?"

"I suppose so. Why?"

"There are devices, you know, that can be attached to the engine of a car such that when the car is started, it blows sky high." The razor paused for a moment. "Isn't that intriguing?" it said at last.

"Beautiful," said Filmore slowly. "I'll be at the office when it happens. You know, I feel better already. Thank you."

"Nothing at all," said the razor.

Filmore did not come home for supper that evening. Mrs. Filmore absorbed this patiently. She had long ago learned to patiently endure Filmore's many eccentricities.

When he finally did arrive, there was a package clutched under one arm.

"What do you have in the package?" his wife inquired.

"Oh, just a little something to make life more pleasant around here," he said cheerily. "Be patient. You'll find out soon enough."

He hustled off to the bedroom.

In the bedroom, Filmore stowed his package behind a number of parcels on the upper shelf of his clothes closet.

I'll hook it up later tonight while Elvira is watching her insipid television programs, he said to himself. Then deciding that a bath would be refreshing, he traded his clothes for a bathrobe, procured towel and washcloth from the linen closet and marched briskly into the bathroom. He flung his bathrobe into a corner, stepped boldly into the bathtub, inserted the stopper, put his right hand under the spigot, and with his left hand turned on the hot water.

Scalding hot water tumbled out of the spigot onto Filmore's right hand. There was little, if any, warming-up period. No one had touched the water heater since Filmore turned it up that morning.

Electrified, Filmore leaped back, lost his balance, and fell. His head hit the porcelain with a resounding crack. The scalding hot water continued to tumble out of the spigot, and very soon it covered his naked body.

The bathtub was nearly full when Mrs. Filmore knocked timidly

on the bathroom door. She thought she would capitalize on Filmore's good mood and ask him if he would save her a little hot Water. She got no response, of course.

In what was perhaps the boldest action of her life, she opened the door and peeked in. Instantly she recoiled in horror. She had never before seen the corpse of a man who has drowned in the bathtub.

Trembling with shock, she managed to enter the room and turn off the hot water. Then, pale and visibly shaken, she made her way slowly to the bedroom and sat down at her dressing table.

She sat for some time trying to stop her limbs from shaking. A person tries and tries to accomplish something, and then it is accomplished for him, quite by accident, in some surprising fashion. Such surprises can be emotionally upsetting. Finally, Mrs. Filmore seemed to regain some measure of control over herself.

"What should I do now?" she said to her hairbrush.

"Call the police and tell them there's been a terrible accident," the brush replied.

* * * *

"The Plot" is my first published story, Herzog says. The basic idea came straight from an Ann Landers column. A wife wrote in to ask Ann's advice about her husband. It seems that he wouldn't eat her food because, he claimed, she was trying to poison him. He was tipped off to her scheme by his electric razor ... As I recall, Ann advised the woman to send her husband to a psychiatrist . . .

Which simply would not do.

Tom Herzog Is a graduate student of psychology at the University of Michigan: Professionally, my goal Is to teach psychology and to do research at the university level. My broad area of interest is perception and cognition, and I like to play with neural models of behavior. I am currently engaged in research on the uses of kinesthetic aftereffect In the Investigation of personality through perception. As a psychologist,. I have been heavily Influenced by the writings of D. O. Hebb. I only mention that because there an factions in modern psychology . . .

One quick query, and a remarkable seven-page reply later, I not only understood *something* of the faction lines in modern psychology, and a little bit about kinesthetic aftereffect, but I could see why a "Neo-Hebbian" ("an inveterate neural mechanistic theorist") *had* to find a way around a trip to the headshrinker. ("Personality theorists" —-and that includes virtually all schools of psychiatry—"are

mechanists, but not *neural* mechanists.")

Not even Herzog's letter, with its inspired three-dimensional (areas, schools and "father-Images") analysis of the many-mansioned structure of contemporary psychology, leaves me *exactly* sure where the Bidwell sisters would fit—although I may be checking the wrong catalog. Possibly religion? Communications? Maybe cartography . . .

David Bunch, investigator of the Bidwells, is a most unlikely young man from Missouri who spends his days making maps for the Air Force, and (judging by output) every other minute turning out a unique brand of—well. Warren Miller, writing in *Paperback Review,* said: "He has the new eyes and new mouth we now demand of writers," and perhaps that is as close as one comes to classifying the terrible lessons of Little Brother and Little Sister ("The Monsters" in *Husk* 1965, or "Training Talk" in the 10th *Annual), or* the flesh-and-metal people of tortured Moderan ("The Walking, Talking, I-Don't-Care Man" in *Amazing), or* the gay-sad old people of "The Time Battler" in *The Smith,* and the "Bidwell Endeavors."

A collection of Mr. Bunch's work. Good *Luck, Good Hanging and Good Kicking,* will be published shortly by Windfall Press.

* * * *

INVESTIGATING THE BIDWELL ENDEAVORS
DAVID R. BUNCH

Actually, for two crazy people, I thought they had a pretty good service, when I first heard about it. Not that I set too much store by it, naturally, being the way I am, scientific and realistic, but I regarded it as pleasant, thoughtful of others, unselfish, very very unusual, harmless and probably something to be entirely avoided by any sane normal person wherever he might be. But my curiosity was such that I couldn't leave it alone. I had to see, had to investigate. And now that I'm back from seeing, I'm not so sure that any of my first, hearsay impressions of this business were valid, or even accurate.

You see the Bidwell twins, sisters, were the ones operating this little service. And when I say twins, sisters, I know you surely are going to get right down to thinking of cute little twin sisters you've known, as alike probably as two little twin China dolls might be, waiting all dressed up for a party or tripping down morning-glory paths toward school buses. But don't think of anything like that. Think of the Bidwell sisters, old, wrinkled, spinsterish, gray, faded, one short, one about a foot taller than any woman ever should be—that kind of twins. And while you're thinking of that kind of twins, think of them standing side by side looking like some great gaunt bird and its shrunken hairy egg, dressed in starchy white, on the clean white porch of their clean white mansion in a clean little mid-America mid-twentieth-century town. (No, they'll not be taking a break from their self-appointed professional duties. Not exactly. They'll be waiting for the mail.) And while you're about it, don't forget to think of their eyes, clear blue, like the blue of a December sky looking down on snow. Real evangel eyes, you'll think at first, but on second guess you won't know what to guess, probably, so you'll just stall for time and think of other matters.

Like a first floor room all littered with papers, you'll think of that. And a postman toiling hard up the street, leading with both hands a big postal bag on a cart, bringing the Bidwell mail, more dailies than the rest of the town all put together takes. Then if you look around back, in the backyard, you'll see the mountains and foothills of stacked newspapers and the neat, wired bundles of clippings, all waiting for the Boy Scouts to come and haul them away. After a while, just looking at these tall hillocks and big peaks of paper, you'll

begin to get a little of the feel of the enormity of the Bidwell undertaking.

Then from a vantage point in the backyard, on top of a Mt. McKinley of old news, maybe, you'll look at the Bidwell house, really look at it, especially the roof. And you'll see that the roof on top of that three-story house, a mansion by the standards of small-town turn-of-the-century America, bristles with metal crosses and wires and gray speaker cones. Then if you think of money and expense, you'll wonder why-in-the-world-did-they-do-it. But ... remember the stories ... and how old Bidwell, the elder, did have money, much money, as well as two odd-size daughters ... and some eccentric dreams ...

Three stories down from a roof that clamors and talks you go up the white marble steps, up to a porch and a white door marked patients enter here, and you tell whoever answers the doorbell, lying as you go, that you have been sent by the state to investigate Bidwell Endeavors, just a routine check, naturally. And you flash a false badge and a name and you push on in to the first floor room that reminds you vaguely of operating rooms you have seen. It is hard to know just why it does that, exactly, except maybe for the neatness and the white, and the evidence of much cutting and severing. Many shiny shears and other cutting edges are prominently to be seen in that big room. But the newspapers spread on the operating tables throw the picture all out of perspective in your mind. But really now—just your being here—doesn't that deny that you really hoped for anything to stay in normal perspective in your mind?

Suddenly you are aware of one salient fact: you are standing alone in a big white paper-littered room with Miss Angela Bidwell. And for all that you are over half a foot more than six feet tall, she in her flat-heel nursing shoes is looking straight into your eyes, on the level. Only it isn't really a straight-in steady look; it's all wrong to claim that it is. This is more like being hit in the eyes with pulsations of cold blue water, you somehow think, and yet her eyes seem very dry. You finally settle for thinking about blue pieces of ice flailing into your eyeballs, and you stand there afraid that you are going to shake. Why doesn't she speak? You have given a name, stated your business, and you have shown her the false badge. And it looks authentic enough, doesn't it?

When finally she does start to speak, you see her mouth open and close with the words, but the sounds have that eerie quality of coming from somewhere farther removed, down from some greater height, like maybe out of the ceiling. "Mr. Frine," she says, dry, like a fingernail file on a bone, "the world is full of sickness, and we are all physicians. Or should be. As Father always said. Likewise, we are all patients, Mr. Frine. Or should be. As Father always said.—I hope you

understand." I nodded, and held my eyes against the smiting pieces of cold.

When she spoke again she seemed apologetic. "I am sorry you did not come in proper form to be admitted, Mr. Frine. You seek help. We all seek help. And some of us seek to help.—But perhaps you did not understand. You'll have to get regular, Mr. Frine."

"I came to investigate your hospital," I shouted. "I'm from the state," I lied. "It's routine. I'm not sick!"

My shout brought the short sister pounding up from the basement, and after a silence a strange clamor had started in new, upstairs. I noticed as she came bouncing up that she had a box of electrical fuses in one hand. She smote me with dry blue eyes, cold, very much like her sister's, and she spoke as though my being there was the most natural-normal thing in the world. "Right in the middle of alleviation for Mr. Bent and all the rest, it goes," she panted. "The electric goes off. I'm scared. I'm thinking ho, no! Not those expensive installation men again. I fly down to the basement. Luckily it is just a fuse. I replace it. And now Mr. Bent and all his fellow sufferers can just go ahead and be alleviated. I'm so happy for Mr. Bent and all his fellow sufferers in the ward. In the ward and in the world!" Then she looked at me as if seeing me for the real first time. Her mouth opened and closed twice without sound and finally she said to her tall icily staring sister, "Why, what in the world!? He can't be admitted into this room in this form. What would dear dead sainted Father say? Why has he come here?—Oh, we do wish to help, but—"

"I'm not a patient," I yelled. "I'm not sick. I'm an investigator. From the state."

"Oh, but we're all patients," the tall icily staring sister cut in, "all ill. That's what makes it so worthwhile—and wonderful—that we're all with the power of physician. All sick and all physicians. What a wonderful Power ... to have planned it so. As Father always said." And her eyes became glittering points for a little instant.

A sound outside, on the porch, of some ponderous bundle going into a box startled both of the sisters to life and made their eyes dance away from me and shine with cold lights. "The new patients are arriving," Miss Angela said. And Miss Angia said, "Oh, yes! such a big bundle of them this morning. How lucky they are to be here. How lucky we are to be here to help them. What a wonderful Power—" Then both sisters rushed outside to heave and pull at the patients until they had them all inside the white room that was—and I hadn't been wrong here—the operating room. I watched Miss Angela and Miss Angia select with a show of pleasure the sharpest blades and the shiniest shears, and when they became absorbed with the searching out of the patients, I slipped away.

I went upstairs to the second floor, toward where a clamor was, where, I supposed, Mr. Bent and the rest were having their alleviations. I was prepared for something eccentric, but thinking of it in bars now, or in my room late at night when the lumps in the bed are big and gnaw at me and I cannot sleep, or when the rains all day rain down on the blue-Sunday windows, I cannot tell myself that I was really prepared. Is one ever really fully prepared for anything, though? Aren't we always in the state of preparing? Or, as Miss Angela said, "All are patients."

There had one time been six huge rooms upstairs on the second floor of the Bidwell mansion. But now the partitions were down and what had once been six was now one, one mammoth room of white beds, rows of them arranged as in a hospital. By each hospital-sheeted bed was an apparatus of wires and speaker cones and a tape recorder playing—softly, soothingly, playing the Bidwell prayers to what looked to me like empty beds. My mind groped for something tangible out of the soothing sounds of the prayers and all this eerie scene, and I thought of Mr. Bent. Look for Mr. Bent, that was the thing to do! Miss Angia had as good as said he was up here—Mr. Bent.

So I, a fake state investigator, motivated by more curiosity than ever has been good for me, went up and down the white rows of the beds, looking among the beds and the wires and the prayers for a Mr. Bent. When I found him, or I mean found his bed, he wasn't there! The Bidwell prayers were spewing their soft urgency at an empty bed, or so it seemed to me. I looked at the fever chart on the end of the bed. It indicated that Mr. Bent was still in need of much much help. Oh, he was in a bad shape according to his chart. "Mr. Bent," I cried and there wasn't any answer, though the prayers went on undiminished. "Mr. Bent, in your shape you shouldn't be out of bed, Mr. Bent." In desperation I flung the covers back. And there was Mr. Bent! Taped to his bed! He was smiling. A man of about forty, he had killed his wife and his kids, all six of the little Bents. And then he had run away with his beauteous luscious mistress. Or so some news-hawk had said.—Oh no, Mr. Bent. No! No! Mr. Bent.

And upon closer looking, I saw that the other beds were not empty either. Not by a handful of paper. Terrible humanity was in them. Some had pictures, and all had descriptions, descriptions of foul deeds in them. Oh, Mr. Bent! No! And all the Mr. Bents! No!

As I fled down the stairs, with the soft urgent Bidwell prayers still hammering through my head and gnawing at my mind, I hoped I might sneak out unnoticed past the surgeons still busily, almost joyfully, it seemed, cutting the patients. But it was not to be. Two pairs of stark blue eyes flared up from their work and held me. "Oh no, Mr. Frine," Angela said. "You'll have to come in the right way and

be admitted properly, Mr. Frine. Then we'll be happy to help you. You'll just have to be regular, Mr. Frine."

Somehow, I don't know how, I unhooked from those four blue eyes and fled. But once out in the sun and running I couldn't resist looking back again and again at the house of the Bidwell Endeavors, especially at the roof of that house where all the metal crosses and wires and cones were and the Bidwell prayers going out worldwideward toward heaven and the objects of their help. And on my way home from that town I couldn't keep from wondering how in the world would be the best way for me to enter that special and specialized upstairs of prayer. Should I go kill my wife and four kids or just hurry and hold up a bank? Or maybe to cheat on taxes would get me a front-page portrayal!

I have mentioned some of the trials of the anthologist's life; but it has its bonuses, and most of them come in the mail. Sometimes it is no more than a sort of passing-train-window glimpse into another writer's life—attitudes, work habits, motivations, satisfactions— in the basic bio-letter. Occasionally a correspondence matures into fruitful dialogue, and sometimes personal friendship. With Peter Redgrove, the very first letter seemed to pick up in the middle of a conversation:

About s-f—I've read *it avidly—I thought it was because I had been trained as a scientist*—now *I discover that it wasn't only my s-f reading that was exploratory of things in myself*—gods, *demons, blessed and cursed isles but also my science. Writing seemed to be able to take the mind and feelings further, so professional science had to take second place—I mean that my science was no matter of objective curiosity, but rather of feeling into the life of things (biology and chemistry).*

For the record: Redgrove was born in 1932, and won scholarships in the Natural Sciences to Queens' College, Cambridge. He has worked as chemist, journalist, and editor; spent a year as "visiting poet" at the University of Buffalo; is now Gregory Fellow in Poetry at Leeds University. He has five volumes of poetry in print in England (most recent: *The Force and Other Poems,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), and another. *Against Death,* to be published by Macmillan here. He also appears regularly on BBC-3's poetry programs.

* * * *

THE CASE
PETER REDGROVE

Clinic Director: “This is schizophrenia. The boy was close to his mother: a widow after a very unsatisfactory marriage. His illness, which must always have been latent, accelerated when she died. ... He suffers also from an hysterical blindness, and cannot open his eyes. They have remained shut for the ten years of his illness. ... He likes to spend his time in the garden and likes also to be called ‘Father.’ He never replies when he is so called, but only smiles a little, and turns away. ... I have often noticed that such cases seem unwilling to be cured....”

I am a gardener,
A maker of trials, flowers, hypotheses.
I water the earth.
I raise perfumes there.
Mother told me to stand, and I did so,
Stepping towards the window in which she sat.
“Now, did you find him, your other half?
And mine,” she said, and I shook my head:
“No, my time is so short and I’ll take no oath.”
“You’ve just taken one, by standing,
My dear one,” she said, and she told me how the stars
Had said as much, and I concurred and saw
How the crystalware of the polished table,
The cabinets of glass things walling the room,
The tall roses beyond the glass, the gloss of the table,
Had said as much in sunshine from my first tottering.
So she lifted my hand and kissed it and said I was to be celibate,
And this was great good fortune and I was a good child
For I had a quest and few had as much.
The roses nodded.
So I became a gardener,
A maker of prayers, flowers, hypotheses.
A gardener “washed in my fertile sweat,”
My hair of an opulent brown “like the Lord’s,
That makes you think of fertile fields.”
And among the flowers, in the walled garden, “This is life!” she cried,

“What a shame, oh what a shame,” she said,
“What a shame we have to die,” she cried, all
The flowers pumping their natures into her, and plumping
Into her nostrils, winged wide, she leaning,
Leaning back, breathing deeply, blushing deeply,
Face shining and deep breath and tall brick
Holding the air still and the heat high in a tall room.
And I swam in the thunderstorm in the river of blood, oil and cider,
And I saw the blue of my recovery open around me in the water,
Blood, cider, rainbow, and the apples still warm after sunset
Dashed in the cold downpour, and so this mother-world
Opened around me and I lay in the perfumes after rain out of the river
Tugging the wet grass, eyes squeezed, straining to the glory,
The burst of white glory like the whitest clouds rising to the sun
And it was like a door opening in the sky, it was like a door opening in the water,
It was like the high mansion of the sky, and water poured from the tall french
windows.
It was like a sudden smell of fur among the flowers, it was like a face at dusk
It was like a rough trouser on a smooth leg. Oh, shame,
It was the mother-world wet with perfume. It was something about God.
And she stood there and I wanted to tell her something and she was gone.
It was something about God. She stood smiling on the wet verge
And she waited for me to tell her but she was gone.
And three gusts of hot dry air came almost without sound
Through the bushes, and she went. Through the bushes
Of blown and bruised roses. And she went. And the bushes were blown
And the gusts were hot, dry air, nearly black with perfume,
Alive with perfume. Oh shame. It was like an announcement,
Like an invitation, an introduction, an invitation, a quick smile in the dusk.
It was like a door opening on a door of flowers that opened on flowers that were
opening.

It was like the twist of a rosy fish among lily-pads that were twisting on their deep
stems.
The rosy goldfish were there in the dusky pond, but she was gone.
It was something about God. My hand made a wet door in the water
And I thought of something I knew about God. My mother
Stared at me from the pool over my shoulder and when I turned she was gone.
Then the wind blew three hot dry gusts to me through the broken rose-bushes
And she came to me dusky with perfume and I walked towards her
And through her, groping for her hand. And it was something about God.
And I searched in my head for it with my eyes closed. But it was gone.
And I became a gardener, a hypothesiser, one who would consult his sensations,
For “we live in sensations and where there are none there is no life,”
One with the birds that are blue-egged because they love the sky!
With the flocks of giraffes craning towards the heavens!
With the peacocks dressed in their love for the high sun
And in their spectra of the drifting rains, one
With the great oaks in my keeping that stretched up to touch God!
And one who could look up gladly and meet God’s gaze,
His wide blue gaze, through my blood, as I think;
And God was silent and invisible and I loved him for it,
I loved him for his silent invisibility, for his virile restraint,
And I was one with my peacocks that sent out their wild cry
Sounding like shrill “help!” and meaning no such thing,
While my flocks of deer wrote love in their free legs
Their high springy haunches and bounding turf. And they would pause
And look upwards, and breathe through wide nostrils, and all day
It was wide and firm and in God’s gaze and open: tussock and turf, long lake,
Reed-sigh, silence and space, pathway and flower furnace
Banked up and breathing.

And the people. And the causeway into the walled garden.
And the people walking in so slowly, on their toes
Through the wide doorway, into the cube of still air,
Into the perspective of flowers, following each other in groups,
Gazing around, “Oh, what shame, to die!” and the great doorway
And ourselves, smiling, and standing back, and they changed,
Concentrated, concentrating, at the edges of the body, the rims
Tighter, clearer, by the sensations of their bodies, solidified, bound,
Like the angels, the bodies’ knowledge of the flowers inbound
Into its tightening and warming at the heart of flowers, the fire called
“Then-shall-ye-see-and-your-heart-shall-rejoice—
And-your-bones-shall-sprout-as-the-blade.. ..”
And she was gone. And she lay down like the earth after rain.
It was love-talk in every grain. And something about God.
The brick walls creaked in the wind, grain to grain.
And judgement came as the father comes, and she is gone.
Clouds swoop under the turf into the pond, the peacock cries
“Help!” strutting in its aurora, love talks
Grain to grain, gossiping about judgement, his coming. Ranges
Tumble to boulders that rattle to shingles that ease to wide beaches
That flurry to dust that puffs to new dusts that dust
To dusting dust, all talking, all
Gossiping of glory, and there are people
In the gardens, in white shirts, drifting,
Gossiping of shame through the gardens. “Oh glory!”
Through the gardens. . . . Well, father, is that how you come?
Come then.
Whose breath is it that flares through the shrubberies?
Whose breath that returns? Look at the people
All ageing to judgement, all
Agreeing to judgement. Look at that woman
Still snuffing up the flowers. My mother!
Look at her. She bends backwards to the tall flowers, falls.

Her flower-laden breath returns to the skies.
I think this garden is a prayer,
Shall I burn it as an offering?
And I think these people are a prayer,
I think they are a message.
Shall I burn them for their syllable?
There is a fire crying “shame!” here already!
It mixes dying with flowering.
I think we husk out uttering. I think
We tip it out. Our perfect syllable,
Tripped out over the death-bed, a one,
Round, perfectly-falling silence.
Look how they seek the glory over these flowers!
I wanted to say something about God,
My syllable about God. I think
We are a prayer. I think
He wants his breath back, unhusked
Of all the people, our dying silences,
Our great involuntary promise
Unhusked, flying out into the rain, over the battlefields,
Switching through shrubberies, into the sky. . . .
You press, oh God!
You press on me as I press on an eyeball,
You press sunsets and autumns and dying flowers,
You press lank ageing people in gardens “Oh shame
To die,” you press roses and matchflames like wisps of your fingers,
Your great sun cuffs age at us. I will bring,
I will bring you in, father, through the bounds of my senses,
Face to face, father, through the sockets of my head,
Haul you in, father, through my eyes with my fingers,
Into my head through my eyes, father, my eyes, oh my eyes. . . .
To live in the blind sockets, the glorious blunt passages,
Tended by gardeners, nostril, eye, mouth,
Bruised face in a white shirt ageing,
To be called “Father” and to hear call high
“Oh shame, what a shame, to die” as they see the great flowers,
To hear the peacock “help!” that means no such thing,
And to live unseeing, not watching, without judging, called “Father.”

After the Neo-Hebbian, Bidwellian, and poetic-subjectivist viewpoints already expressed, it seems appropriate to investigate the clinician's outlook. The following much-excerpted reprint is from a new magazine called Voices; the author, Jay Haley, has kindly given me permission to publish this drastically foreshortened version of a part of his article "The Art of Being Schizophrenic."

... To use *the term "schizophrenic" loosely for anyone who* wanders in *the hospital door looking befuddled betrays those individuals who have worked long and hard to achieve the disease.*

People who have attempted schizophrenia without the correct family background have universally failed. . . . They can erupt into psychotic-like behavior in combat, or when caught in some other mad and difficult situation, but they are unable to sustain *that behavior when the environment seems to right itself. The same point applies to the variety of fascinating drugs which are falsely said to induce psychosis. Not only does the drug influence miss the essence of the* experience, but *the effect wears rapidly off. The occasional goat who manages to be a schizophrenic after the drug has left his system is easily separated from the sheep who go back* to *normal—he has come from the right sort of family and probably would have achieved schizophrenia even without the benefit of medical research.*

The Family: ... *as individuals, the family members are unrecognizable on the street, but bring them together and the outstanding feature is immediately apparent—a kind of formless, bizarre despair overlaid with a veneer of glossy hope and good intentions concealing a power-struggle-to-the-death* coated *with a quality of continual confusion.*

The Mother: *Just as the child in a circus family learns from his parents how to maneuver on the slack wire, so does the schizophrenic learn from his mother how to maneuver acrobatically in interpersonal relations. To achieve schizophrenia a man must have experienced a mother who has a range of behavior unequaled except by the* most *accomplished of actresses. She is capable, when stung (which occurs whenever any suggestion is made* to *her), of weeping, promising violence, expressing condescending concern, threatening to go mad and fall apart, being kind and pious, and offering to flee the country if another word is said.*

The Father: . . . *must teach him to remain immovable. The father of the schizophrenic has a* stubbornness *unequaled among men (as well as the skill to keep a woman in the state of exasperated despair which helps mother make use of her full range of behavior).* On *occasions when present and sober such a father can easily say, "I am right, God in heaven knows I cannot be proven wrong, black is not white and you know it too in your heart of hearts."*

The Sibling (important, but not essential): . . . *the kind of person who is hated on contact—a do-gooder, a good-in-schooler, a sweet, weak,*

kind bastard of a sibling.

The Budding Schizophrenic: . . . *must hold a certain position in the family. . . . Like any artist, several hours a day of practice over many years are necessary.*

It is the primary function of the schizophrenic to be the representative failure in the family. . . . The average schizophrenic shows his artistry by achieving more than usual ability along this line, while also indicating at regular intervals that he could do quite a good job at succeeding if he wanted to, thus giving [his parents] sufficient cause for disappointment.

The primary responsibility of the schizophrenic is to hold the family together. Although social scientists, even family therapists, have not yet the vaguest idea how to prevent a family from disintegrating, the schizophrenic child accomplishes this with ease. It is his duty to use his keen perception and interpersonal skill to maintain the family system in a stable state, even if that state is a mood of constant despair. His importance in this function appears on those rare occasions when the schizophrenic abandons his disease and becomes normal, succeeding in life and leaving his family. His parents at once individually collapse, losing their sense of purpose in life, and they set about to divorce.

[If, on The other hand, the family situation deteriorates, requiring heroic measures on the part of the schizophrenic...]

The Psychotic Episode: ... *is merely a more extreme version of other behavior of the schizophrenic at times of family crisis, but this time it precipitates him into a situation which calls forth all his skill— the treatment situation.*

Only in *the mental hospital can schizophrenia achieve its full flowering. Just as a plant reaches its greatest growth in well-manured ground, so does the schizophrenic achieve his full range on the closed wards of mental institutions. Yet oddly* enough *the first reaction of the schizophrenic to hospitalization is a stout objection.*

The Hospital: . . . *the outstanding* feature *of a mental institution is a kind of formless, bizarre despair overlaid with* a *veneer of glossy hope and good intentions* concealing *a, power struggle to the death between patients and staff, coated with a quality of continual confusion. The basic art of schizophrenia lies in a genius for dealing with power struggles, and of course in a mental hospital the problem of power is central. It should not be thought that the struggle between patient and staff is unequal. True, the staff has drugs, tubs, cold packs, shock treatments (both insulin and electric), brain operations, isolation cells, control of food and all privileges, and the ability to form in gangs composed of aides, nurses, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. The schizophrenic* Jacks *all these appurtenances of power, including the* use *of gang tactics, since he is essentially a loner,* but he *has his manner and his* words *and a stout and determined heart.*

(For those who would like to read more. *Voices* is a publication of the American Academy of Psychotherapists. Mr. Haley is director of the Family Experiment Project at the Palo Alto Mental Research Institute, and the author of several books, including *Strategies of Psychotherapy.)*

* * * *

THERE'S A STARMAN IN WARD 7
DAVID ROME

when i woke this morning the starman had been put in the bed next to mine! ! !

(Let me tell you about him, Papa. His head which is the only part I see of him in the mornings is bald as an egg and gray like old newspaper soaked in water. But his gray eyes smiled up at me friendlily.)

It was almost light, and they had forgotten to pull the blinds down last night, so the dawn was coming in. There was a lot of noise in A and the Starman sat up slowly and said jesus god where am i?

Jesus God, mother of all
Rolled me in porridge
And let me fall

The Starman was skinny, and he wore pajama top and no bottom. They don't give you pants if they find out you -------- the bed.

what is the name of this place, asked the Starman.

"Ward 7," I told him. Then I said he was lucky they put him here. 8 is the one to scream about, jesus (love him!) 8888 is the place I get scared about. You'd be scared too, Papa, if you could hear them talk about 8. I won't ever go there though, they don't put little kids in 8. I hope.

8
8
8

The Starman didn't even look happy about being in 7. He got out of bed and stood gaping down at his white legs, then he saw his locker which was beside his bed, and he opened it as though he expected something to jump out at him.

just then the hooter started hooting and everybody groaned and the keys rattled in the lock and the door came open.

When the lights came on everybody looked to see who it was today. It was john. That was good for some, like Daddy, but not so good for me. john is okay, Papa, but he hurts (no he doesn't!) some of us sometimes (it's a lie!) Papa, when we don't do our work like sweeping the veranda and picking papers off the yard.

john came down the rows of beds, pulling back the sheets and telling us to get out of bed you lazy -------- (-------- you I said to him under my breath). But I got out and started getting dressed.

I take the chance to peek at the Starman's locker and I see it got

his name on it: Charlie.

(Big Jim wouldn't get out of bed and john just hit him. Big Jim is hollering now and getting out of bed.)

Some of the guys are washing themselves, but I led the Starman past them and out through the open doors. It was a cold morning, the sky a kind of purple colour along the horizon and blue higher up. The garden looked dark, and it was empty. Across the road a light was burning in the dispensary. A work party went by, snuffling and coughing in the cold. (They're lucky — they get to wheel gravel down by the highway and see the cars.)

I opened the door to the TV room and showed the Starman in. Most of the chairs was still empty. I said we should sit down until our names were called for medicine, but the Starman stood looking about him as though he didn't hear.

It's a nice room. Very big but warm, with the Office fitting snugly in one corner, some tables with flowers in vases, rows of chairs in front of the TV set which stands on a high shelf where we can't reach it.

The room was starting to fill. We stood watching the stragglers come in, and I told the Starman their names and he seemed to remember even though I only told him once. (I was surprised because I didn't know he was the Starman then, Papa, I thought he was just Charlie!)! ! !

Charlie is

my darling

Eric came in with john holding his arm. This is because Eric falls over most of the time, so he wears a cushion around his head for the times when they aren't around to stop him.

phillipcameinwithouthisclotheson

and everybody laughed, john kicked him on the b u m and sent him back to his dormitory and we all laughed except the Starman.

The Starman told me where he was from. A place called Alfa Sentori, Papa, which sounds like it is in Italy.

I checked with Alice. She took me down Grove Street to the library. It was a nice day, and the air smelled clean and fresh. Alice and I sat at the long table in the library and read all about Alfa Sentori (Alpha Centauri, says the Starman). I saw a lot of my friends, and then Alice and I walked home through souter woods! ! !

The Starman wanted to know why I killed Alice. I tell him because she said dirty words to me after I loved her. I also told him about the mother in the moon.

Mother in the moon

Rolled me in porridge

Turned me into a boy

When I was three

Years old

The Starman came from Alpha Centauri in a spaceship. He says nobody believes him, that's why he's here.

I said what happened to the spaceship. He said it's still hidden in the swamp and when he gets the chance he's getting out of here and going home.

After we got our pills they served us coffee on the veranda. We get one cup of coffee each and one biscuit, except Daddy who gets two when john is on. The Starman asked john for another biscuit.

It was funny, john gave the Starman a look, then pushed him and made him stumble against the wall. But the Starman went straight back and asked for another biscuit, john got mad and took him to the dormitory and shut the door.

(all this is a lie!)

(ward 7 is fine)

(everybody here treats us right)

(I'm a dirty liar about john)

There was a scream from the dormitory, then the door shot open and the Starman came out, his face all twisted. The Charge came and took him away to one of the rooms in the corridor.

The Starman is out of the corridor and back in our dormitory. We lay awake talking last night, and he asked me about my second head. I told him he couldn't see it because it was inside my first head (natch!).

I told him I used to be a writer. I told him how Alice threw that stone which hit me on the head on the beach that day.

The Starman didn't say anything for a while, then he asked me if I was happy.

I said I was but I wished mother had let me stay a girl. Girls have all the fun. (Like Alice!)

the starman says he's going to make me better! ! !

If he's going to make me better why doesn't he get started? He said he would start right away, but this morning there was ot which meant I had to sweep the yard and clean out the lavatory. This afternoon there was rt and some of us were taken for a walk around the grounds. I was allowed to go, but not the Starman.

peter took us for the walk. He told me once that I'm an ep and a schizo. He said nobody can cure me, that's why I'm in this dump, Papa, instead of one of those modern hospitals where they don't hurt (lie!) anybody and where somebody gets cured once in a while.

Still, it could be worse. 8 ! ! !

There's a high fence around 8 and only a low one round 7 ! ! !

When I asked peter about the Starman he said he'd heard he was

a quack head-doctor. He said his real name was Charlie Nebraska and he came from somewhere out west.

The Starman got to talking to himself today. He's over a hundred years old and he left Alpha Centauri four years ago.

The Starman keeps asking the Charge when a psychiatrist will be coming around. We see the foot-doctor regularly, and we get our hair cuts and shaves, but no head-doctor. The Charge says they're using all their doctors in other hospitals where people get cured.

Somebody said maybe they'd cure us if they tried!

888

888

! ! !

! ! ! theStarmanisgoingto try. Not just me! ! He's going to cure everybody! ! !

He says he can cure us all in time, and he's going to work nights at it. He says at least some of us might get well enough to know what kind of death-sentence society has pronounced on us.

I wouldn't have known what he meant a couple of days ago, so maybe he's already started on me! ! !

I've discovered a strange thing. I'm not a kid. I'm almost forty years old. Yesterday morning I stood in front of the mirror and took a look at myself. I was pretty awful! The clothes they give us here are for bums. Somebody gave me a jacket that was two sizes too big.

But when I looked at myself I thought I might have been not so bad once. I'm tall! ! ! I've got dark hair and brown eyes. I gave myself a grin, but that wasn't so good. I'll need new teeth when I get out, Papa, if I'm going to find a girl.

everybody

doesn't

want

to be

cured!

There are only a dozen want it in A dormitory, out of thirty. The rest think the Starman is crazy and they lie in their beds grinning at us while we work.

It isn't easy! ! !

We sit on the floor around the Starman, and nobody has to speak or laugh, or think about anything except being well again.

I woke feeling better than ever before. When I opened my eyes and felt the blood singing through my head I wanted to cry! It's like being born again, Papa, only without that helpless scared feeling.

Most of the others are feeling better, too -------- even the ones who don't join in our circle. When john came in to get us out of bed we all told him to ------- off, and he hurried straight back out again looking

scared.

He's a fat toad of a boy. I could break him in half and maybe I will one day soon.

The Starman worked with us for three hours. Each time the night nurse came nosing around we dived into bed. Then when the coast was clear we gathered around again. There are only two who don't join in now, and one of them is Eric, who sits up in bed and listens.

john has left! ! ! He went last night without notice. they are short of staff now, and there aren't so many to watch us. The Starman says that when he goes, I can come with him. There's room for two aboard the ship — so it's Alpha Centauri or bust!

Talking about bust, there's a pretty girl working in the kitchen here. She's got the nicest --------- you could imagine, Papa, and a few of us are keeping her in mind when we get out !

The Starman said we needn't take our pills any more. So we just queued to get them from mike, waited until he had marked our names off the list, then went one by one and flushed them down the can! !

Later, when mike told me to sweep the yard, I asked him why the hell he didn't sweep it himself. He said while I was sweeping I couldn't think about sticking a knife in his back — and that gave me an idea.

they count our knives and forks when we finish our meals. But that wouldn't stop us using them on the b — s in the dining room! (yuk-yuk.)

Six of us are locked in the corridor rooms today. We attacked the Charge with chairs and split his skull.

Visiting day.

Nobody came to see me, but the Starman had a visitor. A blond woman in a grey coat. I asked him who she was and he said she was a friend who had come to tell him his ship was still okay.

I'm getting smarter *and* wiser every day.

We said a prayer tonight.

he will make us well

he will make us

strong

There'll be twenty-eight of us from A dormitory, and only four of them. We're going to deal with them in the dining room, take their keys and let ourselves out.

I'm coming home, Papa! ! ! Why didn't you visit me?

tonight while they were busy serving us the starman gave the order and we grabbed up our knives and went into action! It only took a minute. I ripped the Charge's keys off his belt and we ran outside into the yard. Next moment the gate was open and we were free! ! !

88888

88888
88888

i trusted the starman and he let me down! He ran off and left me. I'll fix him when they bring him back! ! !

8 is hell. I might as well be dead.

My room looks out on the yard of 7 and I can see all the smart ones who didn't listen to Crazy Charlie Nebraska.

Look where it got me.

! ! !

I can see the sky at night from my room, and I'll keep watching! If he's a dirty liar I'll deal with him when they bring him to 8! If he's not a dirty liar I'll see his ship coming down from the stars soon like a silver angel.

Angel mother
In the moon
love the world
I'll be waiting! ! !

I was a teenage space-nut. I'm still a space-nut—but, I mean, space. Not the Space Race. Not the Missile Gap, or even Rocket Generations. Not even (to my own surprise) most of the Astronauts.

Planets—other worlds with, maybe, other people on them—I'm hot for planets.

And space itself, the big wide universe out there—the sheer volume of it; its unimaginable dimensions; the remoteness, apartness, the *difference*—I want to know what's *really* out there, find out what that difference really is. (If we get far enough out, we might get enough perspective to see what our own world *really* is.)

This, I believe, is the true burden of the odd (and ever odder) assortment of literature that makes up the broad spectrum of s-f: *What do you mean, "real?"*

When, from what viewpoint, with what cause, does a "delusion" become a "dream" instead? And where does dream merge into concept, ambition into prospect, effort into accomplishment? Just where along the line does "psychosis" turn into "imagination," or "fantasy" become "realized?"

The Science Fiction Writers of America held their first annual-awards dinner this year, and there were a lot of new faces. But in among them—in black ties and formals instead of with torn pockets, and some sporting a (distinguished) touch of gray—were quite a few of the old s-f-and-space nuts: the people who (like me) begged, stole, and faked invitations, fifteen (or closer now to twenty) years ago, for the press preview of *Destination Moon* projected on the Hayden Planetarium dome.

We held, as it were, one long joint breath, watching that preview, and came out starry-eyed, more sold than ever on the wild idea that such things would *really* come to be.

And so they did. Now we are not space-nuts; we are Prophets and Experts. As long as we talk about *realities*—like rockets, satellites, and the missile gap, that is.

(Please check your daydreams at the door.)

Well, if "reality" actually does have something to do with hardware, or with the classified (either meaning) body of scientific knowledge, there are at least two of the old s-f hands who ought to have some grasp on it: Arthur Clarke, the Prophet of Telstar, and Isaac Asimov, who is not only an officially certified Learned Doctor, but proved his right to the title all over again last year with *The New Intelligent Man's Guide to Science* (Basic Books). But remember:

They were both teenage space-nuts too.

* * * *

EYES DO MORE THAN SEE
ISAAC ASIMOV

After hundreds of billions of years, he suddenly thought of himself as Ames. Not the wavelength combination which, through all the universe was now the equivalent of Ames-but the sound itself. A faint memory came back of the sound waves he no longer heard and no longer could hear.

The new project was sharpening his memory for so many more of the old, old, eons-old things. He flattened the energy vortex that made up the total of his individuality and its lines of force stretched beyond the stars.

Brock's answering signal came.

Surely, Ames thought, he could tell Brock. Surely he could tell somebody.

Brock's shifting energy pattern communed, "Aren't you coming, Ames?"

"Of course."

"Will you take part in the contest?"

"Yes!" Ames's lines of force pulsed erratically. "Most certainly. I have thought of a whole new art-form. Something really unusual."

"What a waste of effort! How can you think a new variation can be thought of after two hundred billion years. There can be nothing new."

For a moment Brock shifted out of phase and out of communion, so that Ames had to hurry to adjust his lines of force. He caught the drift of other-thoughts as he did so, the view of the powdered galaxies against the velvet of nothingness, and the lines of force pulsing in endless multitudes of energy-life, lying between the galaxies.

Ames said, "Please absorb my thoughts, Brock. Don't close out. I've thought of manipulating Matter. Imagine! A symphony of Matter. Why bother with Energy. Of course, there's nothing new in Energy; how can there be? Doesn't that show we must deal with Matter?"

"Matter!"

Ames interpreted Brock's energy-vibrations as those of disgust.

He said, "Why not? We were once Matter ourselves back-back-Oh, a trillion years ago anyway! Why not build up objects in a Matter medium, or abstract forms or-listen, Brock-why not build up an imitation of ourselves in Matter, ourselves as we used to be?"

Brock said, "I don't remember how that was. No one does."

"I do," said Ames with energy, "I've been thinking of nothing else

and I am beginning to remember. Brock, let me show you. Tell me if I'm right. Tell me."

"No. This is silly. It's-repulsive."

"Let me try, Brock. We've been friends; we've pulsed energy together from the beginning-from the moment we became what we are. Brock, please!"

"Then, quickly."

Ames had not felt such a tremor along his own lines of force in-well, in how long? If he tried it now for Brock and it worked, he could dare manipulate Matter before the assembled Energy-beings who had so drearily waited over the eons for something new.

The Matter was thin out there between the galaxies, but Ames gathered it, scraping it together over the cubic light-years, choosing the atoms, achieving a clayey consistency and forcing matter into an ovoid form that spread out below.

"Don't you remember, Brock?" he asked softly. "Wasn't it something like this?"

Brock's vortex trembled in phase. "Don't make me remember. I don't remember."

"That was the head. They called it the head. I remember it so clearly, I want to say it. I mean with sound." He waited, then said, "Look, do you remember that?"

On the upper front of the ovoid appeared HEAD.

"What is that?" asked Brock.

"That's the word for head. The symbols that meant the word in sound. Tell me you remember, Brock!"

"There was something," said Brock hesitantly, "something in the middle." A vertical bulge formed.

Ames said, "Yes! Nose, that's it!" And NOSE appeared upon it. "And those are eyes on either side," LEFT EYE-RIGHT EYE.

Ames regarded what he had formed, his lines of force pulsing slowly. Was he sure he liked this?

"Mouth," he said, in small quiverings, "and chin and Adam's apple, and

the collarbones. How the words come back to me." They appeared on the form.

Brock said, "I haven't thought of them for hundreds of billions of years. Why have you reminded me? Why?"

Ames was momentarily lost in his thoughts, "Something else. Organs to hear with; something for the sound waves. Ears! Where do they go? I don't remember where to put them!"

Brock cried out, "Leave it alone! Ears and all else! Don't remember!"

Ames said, uncertainly, "What is wrong with remembering?"

"Because the outside wasn't rough and cold like that but smooth and warm. Because the eyes were tender and alive and the lips of the mouth trembled and were soft on mine." Brock's lines of force beat and wavered, beat and wavered.

Ames said, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!"

"You're reminding me that once I was a woman and knew love; that eyes do more than see and I have none to do it for me."

With violence, she added matter to the rough-hewn head and said, "Then let *them* do it" and turned and fled.

And Ames saw and remembered, too, that once he had been a man. The force of his vortex split the head in two and he fled back across the galaxies on the energy-track of Brock-back to the endless doom of life.

And the eyes of the shattered head of Matter still glistened with the moisture that Brock had placed there to represent tears. The head of Matter did that which the energy-beings could do no longer and it wept for all humanity, and for the fragile beauty of the bodies they had once given up, a trillion years ago.

Speaking of reality, or the lack of it, I think part of the reason the Space Race began to make me yawn was the prepackaged imitation-of-life atmosphere surrounding the whole thing—till recently, at least. Between political ploysmanship and scorekeeping, and the deft image-building of the PR people, everything has (or had) acquired a faintly phony air. (I'm still suspicious; I wonder if the PR men didn't decide the operation needed a bit more "realism"?)

In any case, when Major White's walk in space was announced, I couldn't work up enough interest to find a friendly nearby TV set and watch. I knew it could be done; Soviet Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov had done it a week earlier. And I knew what it would look like: I'd already seen Destination Moon.

I *thought* I knew. But Ed While went out there and did everything they told him to, until they told him to get back in. And his wife— his wonderful, non-cardboard wife—watched him and understood, and threw the world one happy sentence not (I *think)* on the prepared script: *"He's having a ball!"*

Then there were the Mars pictures. That time, I did look for a TV set—and I am here to tell you the day of the TV bar is over, at least in Washington, D.C

Well, I saw the pictures in the paper: MARS POSES LIFELESSLY. EARTH STANDS ALONE. NO LIFE ON MARS.

Of course, I don't believe it. (There was all that confusion in interpretation.) I'm holding out for life out there. *Somewhere* out there, anyhow. And, besides, I had Asimov's article. The September *Esquire*

arrived on my doorstep right on the heels of those first Mars photos, with Asimov's article on "The Anatomy of a Man from Mars." Of course, he started off with a disclaimer! *If life on Mars exists at all, it probably resembles only the simplest and most primitive terrestrial plant life.* But then he explained what it *would be,* if it were. . . .

And there's new hope for the moon too, you know: The U.S. Geological Survey found "permafrost"—a "rock-hard layer of ice that never thaws"—9,000 feet up in the High Sierras; the article said there might be such deposits on the moon. And Venus: Sir Bernard Lovell helped there. When the Soviet ship crashed. Sir Bernard was quoted as concerned about contamination of the planet by Earth bacteria. If it *didn't* have life, maybe now it *does?*

Reality can be changed, you know. Sometimes we have to make it (up) as we go along. There's life out there; or there will be. I believe it. Asimov believes it. And Arthur Clarke believes it too.

* * * *

MAELSTROM II
ARTHUR C. CLARKE

He was not the first man, Cliff Leyland told himself bitterly, to know the exact second and the precise manner of his death; times beyond number, condemned criminals had waited for their last dawn. Yet until the very end, they could have hoped for a reprieve; human judges can show mercy, but against the laws of nature there was no appeal.

And only six hours ago he had been whistling happily while he packed his ten kilos of personal baggage for the long fall home. He could still remember (even now, after all that had happened) how he had dreamed that Myra was already in his arms, that he was taking Brian and Sue on that promised cruise down the Nile. In a few minutes, as Earth rose above the horizon, he might see the Nile again; but memory alone could bring back the faces of his wife and children. And all because he had tried to save nine hundred fifty sterling dollars by riding home on the freight catapult instead of the rocket shuttle.

He had expected the first twelve seconds of the trip to be rough, as the electric launcher whipped the capsule along its ten-mile track and shot him off the Moon. Even with the protection of the water bath in which he had floated during countdown, he had not looked forward to the twenty g of takeoff. Yet when the acceleration had gripped the capsule, he had been hardly aware of the immense forces acting upon him. The only sound was a faint creaking from the metal walls; to anyone who had experienced the thunder of a rocket launch, the silence was uncanny. When the cabin speaker had announced, "T plus five seconds—speed two thousand miles an hour," he could scarcely believe it.

Two thousand miles an hour in five seconds from a standing start—with seven seconds still to go as the generators smashed their thunderbolts of power into the launcher. He was riding the lightning across the face of the Moon; and at T plus seven seconds, the lightning failed.

Even in the womblike shelter of the tank, Cliff could sense that something had gone wrong. The water around him, until now frozen almost rigid by its weight, seemed suddenly to become alive. Though the capsule was still hurtling along the track, all acceleration had ceased and it was merely coasting under its own momentum.

He had no time to feel fear, or to wonder what had happened, for the power failure lasted little more than a second. Then, with a jolt

that shook the capsule from end to end and set off a series of ominous, tinkling crashes, the field came on again.

When the acceleration faded for the last time, all weight vanished with it. Cliff needed no instrument but his stomach to tell that the capsule had left the end of the track and was rising away from the surface of the Moon. He waited impatiently until the automatic pumps had drained the tank and the hot-air driers had done their work; then he drifted across the control panel and pulled himself down into the bucket seat.

"Launch Control," he called urgently, as he drew the restraining straps around his waist. "What the devil happened?"

A brisk but worried voice answered at once.

"We're still checking—call you back in thirty seconds. Glad you're okay," it added belatedly.

While he was waiting, Cliff switched to forward vision. There was nothing ahead except stars—which was as it should be. At least he had taken off with most of his planned speed and there was no danger that he would crash back to the Moon's surface immediately. But he would crash back sooner or later, for he could not possibly have reached escape velocity. He must be rising out into space along a great ellipse—and, in a few hours, he would be back at his starting point.

"Hello, Cliff," said Launch Control suddenly. "We've found what happened. The circuit breakers tripped when you went through section five of the track, so your take-off speed was seven hundred miles an hour low. That will bring you back in just over five hours—but don't worry; your course-correction jets can boost you into a stable orbit. We'll tell you when to fire them; then all you have to do is to sit tight until we can send someone to haul you down."

Slowly, Cliff allowed himself to relax. He had forgotten the capsule's vernier rockets; low-powered though they were, they could kick him into an orbit that would clear the Moon. Though he might fall back to within a few miles of the lunar surface, skimming over mountains and plains at a breath-taking speed, he would be perfectly safe.

Then he remembered those tinkling crashes from the control compartment, and his hopes dimmed again—for there were not many things that could break in a space vehicle without most unpleasant consequences.

He was facing those consequences, now that the final checks of the ignition circuits had been completed. Neither on manual nor on auto would the navigation rockets fire; the capsule's modest fuel reserves, which could have taken him to safety, were utterly useless. In five hours, he would complete his orbit—and return to his launching point.

I wonder if they'll name the new crater after me? thought Cliff. "Crater Leyland—diameter ..." What diameter? Better not exaggerate—I don't suppose it will be more than a couple of hundred yards across. Hardly worth putting on the map.

Launch Control was still silent, but that was not surprising; there was little that one could say to a man already as good as dead. And yet, though he knew that nothing could alter his trajectory, even now he did not believe that he would soon be scattered over most of Farside. He was still soaring away from the Moon, snug and comfortable in his little cabin. The idea of death was utterly incongruous—as it is to all men until the final second.

And then, for a moment, Cliff forgot his own problem. The horizon ahead was no longer flat; something even more brilliant than the blazing lunar landscape was lifting against the stars. As the capsule curved round the edge of the Moon, it was creating the only kind of Earthrise that was possible—a man-made one. In a minute it was all over, such was his speed in orbit. By that time the Earth had leaped clear of the horizon and was climbing swiftly up the sky.

It was three-quarters full and almost too bright to look upon. Here was a cosmic mirror made not of dull rocks and dusty plains, but of snow and cloud and sea. Indeed, it was almost all sea, for the Pacific was turned toward him, and the blinding reflection of the Sun covered the Hawaiian Islands. The haze of the atmosphere—that soft blanket that should have cushioned his descent in a few hours' time—obliterated all geographical details; perhaps that darker patch emerging from night was New Guinea, but he could not be sure.

There was a bitter irony in the knowledge that he was heading straight toward that lovely, gleaming apparition. Another seven hundred miles an hour and he would have made it. Seven hundred miles an hour—that was all. He might as well ask for 7,000,000.

The sight of the rising Earth brought home to him, with irresistible force, the duty he feared but could postpone no longer. "Launch Control," he said, holding his voice steady with a great effort. "Please give me a circuit to Earth."

This was one of the strangest things he had ever done in his life—sitting here above the Moon, listening to the telephone ring in his own home a quarter of a million miles away. It must be near midnight down there in Africa and it would be some time before there would be any answer. Myra would stir sleepily—then, because she was a spaceman's wife, always alert for disaster, she would be instantly awake. But they had both hated to have a phone in the bedroom, and it would be at least fifteen seconds before she could switch on the lights, close the nursery door to avoid disturbing the baby, get down the stairs and—

Her voice came clear and sweet across the emptiness of space. He would recognize it anywhere in the Universe, and he detected at once the undertone of anxiety.

"Mrs. Leyland?" said the Earthside operator. "I have a call from your husband. Please remember the two-second time lag."

Cliff wondered how many people were listening to this call, either on the Moon, the Earth or the relay satellites. It was hard to talk for the last time to your loved ones, not knowing how many eavesdroppers there might be. But as soon as he began to speak, no one else existed but Myra and himself.

"Darling," he began. "This is Cliff. I'm afraid I won't be coming home as I promised. There's been a—a technical slip. I'm quite all right at the moment, but I'm in big trouble."

He swallowed, trying to overcome the dryness in his mouth, then went on quickly before she could interrupt. As briefly as he could, he explained the situation. For his own sake as well as hers, he did not abandon all hope.

"Everyone's doing their best," he said. "Maybe they can get a ship up to me in time—but in case they can't—well, I wanted to speak to you and the children."

She took it well, as he had known she would. He felt pride as well as love when her answer came back from the dark side of Earth.

"Don't worry, Cliff. I'm sure they'll get you out and well have our holiday after all, exactly the way we planned."

"I think so, too," he lied. "But just in case—would you wake the children? Don't tell them that anything's wrong."

It was an endless half minute before he heard their sleepy yet excited voices. Cliff would willingly have given these last few hours of his life to have seen their faces once again, but the capsule was not equipped with such luxuries as phonevision. Perhaps it was just as well, for he could not have hidden the truth had he looked into their eyes. They would know it soon enough, but not from him. He wanted to give them only happiness in these last moments together.

Yet it was hard to answer their questions, to tell them that he would soon be seeing them, to make promises that he could not keep. It needed all his self-control when Brian reminded him of the Moon dust he had forgotten once before—but had remembered this time.

"I've got it, Brian—it's in a jar right beside me—soon you'll be able to show it to your friends." (No: Soon it will be back on the world from which it came.) "And Susie —be a good girl and do everything that Mummy tells you. Your last school report wasn't too good, you know, especially those remarks about behavior . . . Yes, Brian, I have those photographs, and the piece of rock from Aristarchus—"

It was hard to die at thirty-five; but it was hard, too, for a boy to

lose his father at ten. How would Brian remember him in the years ahead? Perhaps as no more than a fading voice from space, for he had spent so little time on Earth. In these last few minutes, as he swung outward and then back to the Moon, there was little enough that he could do except project his love and his hope across the emptiness that he would never span again. The rest was up to Myra.

When the children had gone, happy but puzzled, there was work to do. Now was the time to keep one's head, to be businesslike and practical. Myra must face the future without him, but at least he could make the transition easier. Whatever happens to the individual, life goes on; and to modern man life involves mortgages and installments, insurance policies and joint bank accounts. Almost impersonally, as if they concerned someone else—which would soon be true enough—Cliff began to talk about these things. There was a time for the heart and a time for the brain. The heart would have its final say three hours from now, when he began his last approach to the surface of the Moon.

No one interrupted them; there must have been silent monitors maintaining the link between two worlds, but they might have been the only people alive. Sometimes, while he was speaking, Cliff's eyes would stray to the periscope and be dazzled by the glare of Earth—now more than halfway up the sky. It was impossible to believe that it was home for seven billion souls. Only three mattered to him now.

It should have been four, but with the best will in the world he could not put the baby on the same footing as the others. He had never seen his younger son; and now he never would.

At last, he could think of no more to say. For some things, a lifetime was not enough—but an hour could be too much. He felt physically and emotionally exhausted, and the strain on Myra must have been equally great. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts and with the stars, to compose his mind and to make his peace with the Universe.

"I'd like to sign off for an hour or so, darling," he said. There was no need for explanations; they understood each other too well. "I'll call you back in—in plenty of time. Goodbye for now."

He waited the two seconds for the answering goodbye from Earth; then he cut the circuit and stared blankly at the tiny control desk. Quite unexpectedly, without desire or volition, tears sprang into his eyes, and suddenly he was weeping like a child.

He wept for his loved ones and for himself. He wept for the future that might have been and the hopes that would soon be incandescent vapor, drifting between the stars. And he wept because there was nothing else to do.

After a while he felt much better. Indeed, he realized that he was

extremely hungry; there was no point in dying on an empty stomach, and he began to rummage among the space rations in the closet-sized galley. While he was squeezing a tube of chicken-and-ham paste into his mouth, Launch Control called.

There was a new voice at the end of the line—a slow, steady and immensely competent voice that sounded as if it would brook no nonsense from inanimate machinery.

"This is Van Kessel, Chief of Maintenance, Space Vehicles Division. Listen carefully, Leyland—we think we've found a way out. It's a long shot—but it's the only chance you have."

Alternations of hope and despair are hard on the nervous system. Cliff felt a sudden dizziness; he might have fallen, had there been any direction in which to fall.

"Go ahead," he said faintly, when he had recovered. Then he listened to Van Kessel with an eagerness that slowly changed to incredulity.

"I don't believe it!" he said at last. "It just doesn't make sense!"

"You can't argue with the computers," answered Van Kessel. "They've checked the figures about twenty different ways. And it makes sense all right; you won't be moving so fast at apogee, and it doesn't need much of a kick then to change your orbit. I suppose you've never been in a deep-space rig before?"

"No, of course not."

"Pity—but never mind. If you follow instructions you can't go wrong. You'll find the suit in the locker at the end of the cabin. Break the seals and haul it out."

Cliff floated the full six feet from the control desk to the rear of the cabin, and pulled on the lever marked: emergency only-type 17 deep-space suit. The door opened and the shining silver fabric hung flaccid before him.

"Strip down to your underclothes and wriggle into it," said Van Kessel. "Don't bother about the biopack—you clamp that on later."

"I'm in," said Cliff presently. "What do I do now?"

"You wait twenty minutes—and then we'll give you the signal to open the air lock and jump."

The implications of that word "jump" suddenly penetrated. Cliff looked around the now familiar, comforting little cabin, and then thought of the lonely emptiness between the stars—the unreverberant abyss through which a man could fall until the end of time.

He had never been in free space; there was no reason why he should. He was just a farmer's boy with a master's degree in agronomy, seconded from the Sahara Reclamation Project and trying to grow crops on the Moon. Space was not for him; he belonged to the worlds of soil and rock, of Moon dust and vacuum-formed pumice.

"I can't do it," he whispered. "Isn't there any other way?"

"There's not," snapped Van Kessel. "We're doing our damnedest to save you, and this is no time to get neurotic. Dozens of men have been in far worse situations—badly injured, trapped in wreckage a million miles from help. But you're not even scratched, and already you're squealing! Pull yourself together—or we'll sign off and leave you to stew in your own juice."

Cliff turned slowly red, and it was several seconds before he answered.

"I'm all right," he said at last. "Let's go through those instructions again."

"That's better," said Van Kessel approvingly. "Twenty minutes from now, when you're at apogee, you'll go into the air lock. From that point, we'll lose communication: Your suit radio has only a ten-mile range. But we'll be tracking you on radar and we'll be able to speak to you when you pass over us again. Now, about the controls on your suit..."

The twenty minutes went quickly enough; at the end of that time, Cliff knew exactly what he had to do. He had even come to believe that it might work.

"Time to bail out," said Van Kessel. "The capsule's correctly orientated—the air lock points the way you want to go. But direction isn't critical—*speed* is what matters. Put everything you've got into that jump—and good luck!"

"Thanks," said Cliff inadequately. "Sorry that I—"

"Forget it," interrupted Van Kessel. "Now get moving!"

For the last time, Cliff looked round the tiny cabin, wondering if there was anything that he had forgotten. All his personal belongings would have to be abandoned, but they could be replaced easily enough. Then he remembered the little jar of Moon dust he had promised Brian; this time, he would not let the boy down. The minute mass of the sample—only a few ounces—would make no difference to his fate; he tied a piece of string round the neck of the jar and attached it to the harness of his suit.

The air lock was so small that there was literally no room to move; he stood sandwiched between inner and outer doors until the automatic pumping sequence was finished. Then the wall slowly opened away from him and he was facing the stars.

With his clumsy, gloved fingers, he hauled himself out of the air lock and stood upright on the steeply curving hull, bracing himself tightly against it with the safety line. The splendor of the scene held him almost paralyzed; he forgot all his fears of vertigo and insecurity as he gazed around him, no longer constrained by the narrow field of vision of the periscope.

The Moon was a gigantic crescent, the dividing line between night and day a jagged arc sweeping across a quarter of the sky. Down there the sun was setting, at the beginning of the long lunar night, but the summits of isolated peaks were still blazing with the last light of day, defying the darkness that had already encircled them.

That darkness was not complete. Though the Sun was gone from the land below, the almost full Earth flooded it with glory. Cliff could see, faint but clear in the glimmering Earthlight, the outlines of seas and highlands, the dim stars of mountain peaks, the dark circles of craters. He was flying above a ghostly, sleeping land—a land which was trying to drag him to his death. For now he was poised at the highest point of his orbit, exactly on the line between Moon and Earth. It was time to go.

He bent his legs, crouching against the hull. Then, with all his force, he launched himself toward the stars, letting the safety line run out behind him.

The capsule receded with surprising speed, and as it did so, he felt a most unexpected sensation. He had anticipated terror or vertigo —but not this unmistakable, haunting sense of familiarity. All this had happened before; not to him, of course, but to someone else. He could not pinpoint the memory, and there was no time to hunt for it now.

He flashed a quick glance at Earth, Moon and receding spacecraft, and made his decision without conscious thought The line whipped away as he snapped the quick release; now he was alone, two thousand miles above the Moon, a quarter of a million miles from Earth. He could do nothing but wait; it would be two and a half hours before he would know if he could live—and if his own muscles had performed the task that the rockets had failed to do.

And then, as the stars slowly revolved around him, he suddenly knew the origin of that haunting memory. It had been many years since he had read Poe's short stories; but who could ever forget them?

He, too, was trapped in a maelstrom, being whirled down to his doom; he, too, hoped to escape by abandoning his vessel. Though the forces involved were totally different, the parallel was striking. Poe's fisherman had lashed himself to a barrel because stubby, cylindrical objects were being sucked down into the great whirlpool more slowly than his ship. It was a brilliant application of the laws of hydrodynamics; Cliff could only hope that his use of celestial mechanics would be equally inspired.

How fast had he jumped away from the capsule? At a good five miles an hour, surely. Trivial though that speed was by astronomical standards, it should be enough to inject him into a new orbit—one that, Van Kessel had promised him, would clear the Moon by several miles. That was not much of a margin, but it would be enough on this

airless world, where there was no atmosphere to draw him down.

With a sudden spasm of guilt, Cliff realized that he had never made that second call to Myra. It was Van Kessel's fault; the engineer had kept him on the move, given him no time to brood over his own affairs. And Van Kessel was right: In a situation like this, a man could think only of himself. All his resources, mental and physical, must be concentrated on survival. This was no time or place for the distracting and weakening ties of love.

He was racing now toward the night side of the Moon, and the daylit crescent was shrinking even as he watched. The intolerable disk of the Sun, toward which he dared not look, was falling swiftly toward the curved horizon. The crescent moonscape dwindled to a burning line of light, a bow of fire set against the stars. Then the bow fragmented into a dozen shining beads, which one by one winked out as he shot into the shadow of the Moon.

With the going of the Sun, the Earthlight seemed more brilliant than ever, frosting his suit with silver as he rotated slowly along his orbit. It took him about ten seconds to make each revolution; there was nothing he could do to check his spin, and indeed he welcomed the constantly changing view. Now that his eyes were no longer distracted by occasional glimpses of the Sun, he could see the stars in thousands where there had been only hundreds before. The familiar constellations were drowned, and even the brightest of the planets were hard to find in that blaze of light.

The dark disk of the lunar nightland lay across the star field like an eclipsing shadow, and it was slowly growing as he fell toward it. At every instant some star, bright or faint, would pass behind its edge and wink out of existence. It was almost as if a hole were growing in space, eating up the heavens.

There was no other indication of his movement, or of the passage of time—except for his regular ten-second spin. When Cliff looked at his watch, he was astonished to see that he had left the capsule half an hour ago. He searched for it among the stars, without success. By now, it would be several miles behind—but presently it would draw ahead of him, as it moved on its lower orbit, and would be the first to reach the Moon.

Cliff was still puzzling over this paradox when the strain of the last few hours, combined with the euphoria of weightlessness, produced a result he would hardly have believed possible. Lulled by the gentle susurration of the air inlets, floating lighter than any feather as he turned beneath the stars, he fell into a dreamless sleep.

When he awoke at some prompting of his subconscious, the Earth was nearing the edge of the Moon. The sight almost brought on another wave of self-pity, and for a moment he had to fight for control

of his emotions. This was the very last he might ever see of Earth, as his orbit took him back over Farside, into the land where the Earthlight never shone. The brilliant Antarctic ice caps, the equatorial cloud belts, the scintillation of the Sun upon the Pacific— all were sinking swiftly behind the lunar mountains. Then they were gone; he had neither Sun nor Earth to light him now, and the invisible land below was so black that it hurt his eyes.

Unbelievably, a cluster of stars had appeared *inside* the darkened disk, where no stars could possibly be. Cliff stared at them in astonishment for a few seconds, then realized he was passing above one of the Farside settlements. Down there beneath the pressure domes of their city, men were waiting out the lunar night—sleeping, working, loving, resting, quarreling . . . Did they know that he was speeding like an invisible meteor through their sky, racing above their heads at four thousand miles an hour? Almost certainly, for by now the whole Moon, and the whole Earth, must know of his predicament. Perhaps they were searching for him with radar and telescope, but they would have little time to find him. Within seconds, the unknown city had dropped out of sight, and he was once more alone above Farside.

It was impossible to judge his altitude above the blank emptiness speeding below, for there was no sense of scale or perspective. But he knew that he was still descending, and that at any moment one of the crater walls or mountain peaks that strained invisibly toward him might claw him from the sky.

For in the darkness somewhere ahead was the final obstacle—the hazard he feared most of all. Across the heart of Farside, spanning the equator from north to south in a wall more than a thousand miles long, lay the Soviet Range. He had been a boy when it was discovered, back in 1959, and could still remember his excitement when he had seen the first smudged photographs from Lunik III. He could never have dreamed that one day he would be flying toward those same mountains, waiting for them to decide his fate.

The first eruption of dawn took him completely by surprise. Light exploded ahead of him, leaping from peak to peak until the whole arc of the horizon was limned with flame. He was hurtling out of the lunar night, directly into the face of the Sun. At least he would not die in darkness, but the greatest danger was yet to come. For now he was almost back where he had started, nearing the lowest point of his orbit. He glanced at the suit chronometer, and saw that five full hours had now passed. Within minutes, he would have hit the Moon—or skimmed it and passed safely out into space.

As far as he could judge, he was less than twenty miles above the surface, and he was still descending, though very slowly now. Beneath

him, the long shadows of the lunar dawn were daggers of darkness stabbing into the nightland. The steeply slanting sunlight exaggerated every rise in the ground, making even the smallest hills appear to be mountains. And now, unmistakably, the land ahead was rising, wrinkling into the foothills of the Soviet Range. More than 100 miles away, but approaching at a mile a second, a wave of rock was climbing from the face of the Moon. There was nothing he could do to avoid it; his path was fixed and unalterable. All that could be done had already been done, two and a half hours ago.

It was not enough. He was not going to rise above these mountains; they were rising above him.

Now he regretted his failure to make that second call to the woman who was still waiting, a quarter of a million miles away. Yet perhaps it was just as well, for there had been nothing more to say.

Other voices were calling in the space around him, as he came once more within range of Launch Control. They waxed and waned as he flashed through the radio shadow of the mountains; they were talking about him, but the fact scarcely registered on his emotions. He listened with an impersonal interest, as if to messages from some remote point of space or time, of no concern to him. Once he heard Van Kessel's voice say, quite distinctly: "Tell *Callisto's* skipper we'll give him an intercept orbit, as soon as we know that Leyland's past perigee. Rendezvous time should be one hour, five minutes from now." I hate to disappoint you, thought Cliff, but that's one appointment I'll never keep.

For now the wall of rock was only fifty miles away, and each time he spun helplessly in space it came ten miles closer. There was no room for optimism now, as he sped more swiftly than a rifle bullet toward that implacable barrier. This was the end, and suddenly it became of great importance to know whether he would meet it face first, with open eyes, or with his back turned, like a coward.

No memories of his past life flashed through Cliff's mind as he counted the seconds that remained. The swiftly unrolling moonscape rotated beneath him, every detail sharp and clear in the harsh light of dawn. Now he was turned away from the onrushing mountains, looking back on the path he had traveled, the path that should have led to Earth. No more than three of his ten-second days were left to him.

And then the moonscape exploded into silent flame. A light as fierce as that of the Sun banished the long shadows struck fire from the peaks and craters spread below. It lasted for only a fraction of a second, and had faded completely before he had turned toward its source.

Directly ahead of him, only twenty miles away, a vast cloud of

dust was expanding toward the stars. It was as if a volcano had erupted in the Soviet Range—but that, of course, was impossible. Equally absurd was Cliff's second thought—that by some fantastic feat of organization and logistics the Farside Engineering Division had blasted away the obstacle in his path.

For it was gone. A huge, crescent-shaped bite had been taken out of the approaching skyline; rocks and debris were still rising from a crater that had not existed five seconds ago. Only the energy of an atomic bomb, exploded at precisely the right moment in his path, could have wrought such a miracle. And Cliff did not believe in miracles.

He had made another complete revolution and was almost upon the mountains when he remembered that all this while there had been a cosmic bulldozer moving invisibly ahead of him. The kinetic energy of the abandoned capsule—a thousand tons, traveling at over a mile a second— was quite sufficient to have blasted the gap through which he was now racing. The impact of the man-made meteor must have jolted the whole of Farside.

His luck held to the very end. There was a brief pitter-patter of dust particles against his suit, and he caught a blurred glimpse of glowing rocks and swiftly dispersing smoke clouds flashing beneath him. (How strange to see a cloud upon the Moon!) Then he was through the mountains, with nothing ahead but blessed, empty sky.

Somewhere up there, an hour in the future along his second orbit, *Callisto* would be moving to meet him. But there was no hurry now; he had escaped from the maelstrom. For better or for worse, he had been granted the gift of life.

There was the launching track, a few miles to the right of his path; it looked like a hairline scribed across the face of the Moon. In a few moments he would be within radio range; now, with thankfulness and joy, he could make that second call to Earth, to the woman who was still waiting in the African night.

Anyone who does not know by now that Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick are collaborating on a novel and movie to be called 2001: *A* Space *Odyssey* (and completed well before that date, one assumes) has not been reading his London *Sunday Times Magazine*— or his New York *Sunday Times Magazine,* or *Life,* or these *Annuals*— or probably much of anything else. The news has grown from a trickle to a flood over the past year; it is even *barely* possible that the novel, at least, will be published before this book.

Well, we assume it is worth waiting for: Kubrick-and-Clarke *can't* be all bad. In fact, things seem to be picking up in s-f movies, I have not seen *The 10th Victim,* but if the film compares to Sheckley's

"novelization" (of the movie made from his own story), it is good nervous fun. I have seen a preview of Ed Emshwiller's *Relativity,* which has nothing (well, *almost* nothing) to do with Einstein, and everything to do with S (for society, sex, sanity, science, speculation, surrealism, symbolism) F (for fantasy, fact, feelings, fluidity, and first-rate fotografy).

The situation in television is, perhaps, faintly promising. As I write, the offerings are primarily fantasy: *I Dream of Jeannie, Stuart Little. Batman* is not exactly fantasy—maybe the good old invidious term, "pseudoscience"? But ABC has announced a show called Time *Tunnel,* and is considering another. The *Invaders,* both of which are supposed to be bona-fide science fiction. Meantime from England comes word of a BBC-2 series initiated last fall under Producer Irene Shubik, which has done some acceptable, if not exciting, dramatizations of stories by such people as Asimov, Brunner, Pohl, Tenn, and Wyndham. And the late news is that Rattray Taylor, who has been responsible for some first-rate features and documentaries, will produce *The World of J. G. Ballard.*

On stage, of course, symbolism is the thing. Albee and Pinter and the New York production of *Marat/Sade* all veer continually into fantasy—but *not* often over the (shifting and frequently invisible) line into s-f. Closer to home were Durrenmatt's The *Physicists* (now in print here, from Grove Press) and Loring Mandel's *Project Immortality,* which saw only a two-week experimental production at Washington's Arena Theatre in 1965, but will, hopefully, be more widely known by the time this is published.

And then of course there is *Ubu Roi,* by that spectacular scatologist, surrealist, speculative philosopher, and pataphysical scientist Alfred Jarry. *Ubu* is *in.*

Less well known is the "neo-scientific novel" *Exploits and* Opinions *of Doctor Faustroll, 'Pataphysician,* written a full seventy years ago and first published posthumously (in France) in 1911, now in print in English for the first time.

To call *Faustroll a* novel is rather like referring to a Mariner space probe as a flying machine. The term is applicable, but a great deal less than adequate. *Faustroll* is a novel, and a rather old-fashioned one, as far as plot is concerned: The learned doctor, dunned for debts, escapes prison by luring the drink-loving bailiff, Panmuphle, into a Marvelous Invention (a copper-mesh skiff—perhaps the first amphibious vessel), in which, with the added company of the doctor's friend (or familiar), the talking baboon Bosse-de-Nage, a Wonderful Voyage is conducted. After many strange adventures and exotic sights, including a holocaust in which Bosse-de-Nage dies ("provisionally"), the sieve-boat founders, and Panmuphle, the narrator up to this point, disappears

(presumably, unprovisionally, dead). Faustroll takes up the (prophetically posthumous?) narrative in the last section (Book VIII, subtitled, *Ethernity),* from which the first two chapters are reprinted below.

(In the *Selected Works,* editors Ralph Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, supply footnotes and introductory explanations which I shall not include here, beyond commenting that the cosmological, physical, and metaphysical arguments advanced are in specific reply/parody to/ of several essays and addresses of Lord Kelvin, then recently published; that the names mentioned are those of scientists of the time, mentioned in Kelvin's works; and that "the measuring rod, the watch, the tuning fork, the luminiferous ether, the rotating flywheels and linked gyrostats," as well as the Scottish shoemaker's wax, the squares, pyramids, screws, and paddles, plus the reference to the sun as a "cool solid," and the final reference to an optics phenomenon known as "Haidinger's Brushes" are all lifted straight from Kelvin.)

* * * *

TWO TELEPATHIC LETTERS TO LORD KELVIN
ALFRED JARRY

I: Concerning the Measuring Rod, the Watch and the Tuning Fork

It is a long time since I have sent you news of myself; but I do not think you will have imagined that I was dead. Death is only for common people. It is a fact, nevertheless, that I am no longer on earth. Where I am I have only discovered a very short time ago. For we are both of the opinion that, if one can measure what one is talking about and express it in numbers, which constitute the sole reality, then one has some knowledge of one's subject. Now, up to the present moment I knew myself to be *elsewhere* than on earth, in the same way that I know that quartz is situated elsewhere, in the realm of hardness, and less honorably so, than the ruby; the ruby elsewhere than the diamond; the diamond than the posterior callosities of Bosse-de-Nage; and their thirty-two skin-folds—more numerous than his teeth, if one includes the wisdom teeth—than the prose of Latent Obscure.

But was I elsewhere in terms of date or of position, before or to the side, after or nearer? I was in that place where one finds oneself after having left time and space: the infinite eternal, Sir.

It was natural that, having lost my books, my skiff of metallic cloth, the society of Bosse-de-Nage and Monsieur Rene-Isidore Panmuphle, bailiff, my senses, the earth, and those two old Kantian aspects of thought, I should suffer the same anguish of isolation as a residual molecule several centimeters distant from the others in a good modern vacuum of Messrs. Tait and Dewar. And, even then, perhaps the molecule knows that it is several centimeters away! For one single centimeter, the only valid sign for me of space, being measurable and a means of measuring, and for the mean solar second, in terms of which the heart of my terrestrial body beat—for these things I would have given my soul, Sir, despite the usefulness to me of this commodity in informing you of these curiosities.

The body is a more necessary vehicle because it supports one's clothes, and through clothes one's pockets. I had left in one of my pockets by mistake my centimeter, an authentic copy in brass of the

traditional standard, more portable than the earth or even the terrestrial quadrant, which permits the wandering and posthumous souls of interplanetary savants to concern themselves no further with this old globe, nor even with CGS [centimeter gramme second], as far as measurements of size are concerned, thanks to MM. Mechain and Delambre.

As for my mean solar second, were I to have remained on the earth I still could not have been certain of retaining it safely and of being able to measure time validly through its medium.

If in the course of a few million years I have not terminated my pataphysical studies, it is certain that the period of the earth's rotation around its axis and of its revolution around the sun will both be very different from what they are now. A good watch, which I would have had running all this time, would have cost me an exorbitant price, and, in any case, I do not perform secular experiments, have nothing but contempt for continuity, and consider it more esthetic to keep Time itself in my pocket, or the unity of time, which is its snapshot.

For these reasons, I possessed a vibrator better arranged for permanence and for absolute accuracy than the hairspring of a chronometer, one whose period of vibration would have retained the same value over a certain number of million years with an error of less than 1:1,000. A tuning fork. Its period had been carefully determined, before I embarked in the skiff, according to your instructions, by our colleague Professor Macleod, in terms of mean solar seconds, with the prongs of the tuning fork being pointed successively upward, downward and toward the horizon, in order to eliminate the least effect of terrestrial gravity.

I no longer had even my tuning fork. Imagine the perplexity of a man outside time and space, who has lost his watch, and his measuring rod, and his tuning fork. I believe, Sir, that it is indeed this state which constitutes death.

But I suddenly remembered your teachings and my own previous experiments. Since I was simply *nowhere,* or *somewhere,* which is the same thing, I found a substance with which to make a piece of glass, having met various demons, including the Sorting Demon of Maxwell, who succeeded in grouping particular types of movement in one continuous widespread liquid (what you call small elastic solids or molecules): a substance as plentiful as one could desire, in the shape of silicate of aluminum. I have engraved the lines and lit the two candles, albeit with a little time and perseverance, having had to work without even the aid of flint implements. I have seen the two rows of spectrums, and the yellow spectrum has returned my centimeter to me by virtue of the figure 5.892×10^5 [wavelength of yellow light].

Now that we are happy and comfortable, and on dry land, as is

my atavistic habit, since I carry on me the one-thousand-millionth part of a quarter of the earth's circumference [one centimeter], which is more honorable than being attached to the surface of the globe by attraction, permit me, I pray, to note a few impressions for you.

Eternity appears to me in the image of an immobile ether, which consequently is not luminiferous. I would describe luminiferous ether as *circularly* mobile and perishable. And I deduce from Aristotle *(Treatise on the Heavens)* that it is appropriate to write ethernity.

Luminiferous ether, together with all material particles, which I can easily distinguish—my astral body having good pataphysical eyes —possesses the form, at first sight, of a system of rigid links joined together, and having rapidly rotating fly-wheels pivoted on some of the links. Thus it fulfills exactly the mathematical ideal worked out by Navier, Poisson, and Cauchy. Furthermore, it constitutes an elastic solid capable of determining the magnetic rotation of the plane of polarization of light discovered by Faraday. At my posthumous leisure I shall arrange it to have zero moment of momentum as a whole and to reduce it to the state of a mere spring balance.

Moreover, I am of the opinion that one could reduce considerably the complexity of this spring balance of this luminiferous ether by substituting for the linked gyrostats various systems of circulation of liquids of infinite volume through perforations in infinitely small solids.

It will lose none of its qualities as a result of these modifications. Ether has always appeared to me, to the touch, to be as elastic as jelly and yielding under pressure like Scottish shoemakers' wax.

* * * *

II: Concerning the Sun as a Cool Solid

The sun is a cool, solid, and homogeneous globe. Its surface is divided into squares of one meter, which are the bases of long, inverted pyramids, thread-cut, 696,999 kilometers long, their points one kilometer from the center. Each is mounted on a screw and its movement toward the center would cause, *if I had the time,* the rotation of a paddle at the top end of each screw shaft, in a few meters of viscous fluid, with which the whole surface is thinly covered . . .

I was quite disinterested in this mechanical spectacle, not having found again my mean solar second and being distraught at the loss of my tuning fork. But I took a piece of brass and fashioned a wheel in which I cut two thousand teeth, copying everything which M. Fizeau, Lord Rayleigh, and Mrs. Sidgwick had achieved in similar

circumstances.

Suddenly, the second was rediscovered in the absolute measure of 9,413 kilometers per mean solar second of the Siemens unit, and the pyramids, forced to descend on their threads since they found themselves, like myself, in the movement of time, were obliged to come into equilibrium, in order to remain stable, by borrowing a sufficient quantity of Sir Humphrey Davy's repulsive motion; and the fixed matter, the screw shafts and the screw nuts disappeared. The sun became viscous and began to turn on its axis in twenty-five-day cycles; in a few years you will see sunspots on it, and a few quarter-centuries will determine their periods. Soon, in its great age, it will shrink in a diminution of three-quarters.

And now I am being initiated into the science of all things (you will receive three new fragments from two of my forthcoming books), having reconquered all perception, which consists in duration and size. I understand that the weight of my brass wheel, which I clasp between the hebetude of the abstract fingers of my astral body, is the fourth power of eight meters per hour; I hope, deprived of my senses, to recognize color, temperature, taste, and various qualities other than *the six,* in the actual number of revolutions per second . . .

Farewell: I can glimpse already, perpendicularly to the sun, the cross with a blue center, the red brushes toward the nadir and the zenith, and the horizontal gold of foxes' tails.

After which, the astral doctor goes on to a mathematical analysis of the "surface of God," with the conclusion that "God is the tangential point between zero and infinity—" a concept which might be of use to some learned doctors currently embroiled in an effort to determine God's viability.

Of course, all that (except the physics lessons and conclusions about God) is just the *plot.* The book is built out of forty-one "chapters," some containing a eulogy, critique, polemic, or outright backstab, aimed at Jarry's associates and enemies, and other prominent figures of the time; and each is a separate entity, containing a discourse or comment or allegory on art, science, politics, religion, metaphysics, literature . . . and, of course, 'Pataphysics (which is *the* science).

Leaving Dr. Faustroll (and possibly his creator) to further examinations of infinity and The Infinite, we discern a mote on the space horizon, which grows and—no, it is not a bird, not a man, not Superman—but the spaceliner coming in from New Earth . . .

* * * *

WARRIOR
GORDON R. DICKSON

The spaceliner coming in from New Earth and Freiland, worlds under the Sirian sun, was delayed in its landing by traffic at the spaceport in Long Island Sound. The two police lieutenants, waiting on the bare concrete beyond the shelter of the Terminal buildings, turned up the collars of their cloaks against the hissing sleet, in this unweather-proofed area. The sleet was turning into tiny hailstones that bit and stung all exposed areas of skin. The gray November sky poured them down without pause or mercy, the vast, reaching surface of concrete seemed to dance with their white multitudes.

"Here it comes now," said Tyburn, the Manhattan Complex police lieutenant, risking a glance up into the hailstorm. "Let me do the talking when we take him in."

"Fine by me," answered Breagan, the spaceport officer, "I'm only here to introduce you—and because it's my bailiwick. You can have Kenebuck, with his hood connections, and his millions. If it were up to me, I'd let the soldier get him."

"It's him," said Tyburn, "who's likely to get the soldier —and that's why I'm here. You ought to know that."

The great mass of the interstellar ship settled like a cautious mountain to the concrete two hundred yards off. It protruded a landing stair near its base like a metal leg, and the passengers began to disembark. The two policemen spotted their man immediately in the crowd.

"He's big," said Breagan, with the judicious appraisal of someone safely on the sidelines, as the two of them moved forward.

"They're all big, these professional military men off the Dorsai world," answered Tyburn, a little irritably, shrugging his shoulders against the cold, under his cloak. "They breed themselves that way."

"I know they're big," said Breagan. "This one's bigger."

The first wave of passengers was rolling toward them now, their quarry among the mass. Tyburn and Breagan moved forward to meet him. When they got close they could see, even through the hissing sleet, every line of his dark, unchanging face looming above the lesser heights of the people around him, his military erectness molding the civilian clothes he wore until they might as well have been a uniform. Tyburn found himself staring fixedly at the tall figure as it came toward him. He had met such professional soldiers from the Dorsai before, and the stamp of their breeding had always been plain on

them. But this man was somehow more so, even than the others Tyburn had seen. In some way he seemed to be the spirit of the Dorsai, incarnate.

He was one of twin brothers, Tyburn remembered now from the dossier back at his office. Ian and Kensie were their names, of the Graeme family at Foralie, on the Dorsai. And the report was that Kensie had two men's likability, while his brother Ian, now approaching Tyburn, had a double portion of grim shadow and solitary darkness.

Staring at the man coming toward him, Tyburn could believe the dossier now. For a moment, even, with the sleet and the cold taking possession of him, he found himself believing in the old saying that, if the born soldiers of the Dorsai ever cared to pull back to their own small, rocky world, and challenge the rest of humanity, not all the thirteen other inhabited planets could stand against them. Once, Tyburn had laughed at that idea. Now, watching Ian approach, he could not laugh. A man like this would live for different reasons from those of ordinary men— and die for different reasons.

Tyburn shook off the wild notion. The figure coming toward him, he reminded himself sharply, was a professional military man— nothing more.

Ian was almost to them now. The two policemen moved in through the crowd and intercepted him.

"Commandant Ian Graeme?" said Breagan. "I'm Kaj Breagan of the spaceport police. This is Lieutenant Walter Tyburn of the Manhattan Complex Force. I wonder if you could give us a few minutes of your time?"

Ian Graeme nodded, almost indifferently. He turned and paced along with them, his longer stride making more leisurely work of their brisk walking, as they led him away from the route of the disembarking passengers and in through a blank metal door at one end of the Terminal, marked *Unauthorized Entry Prohibited.* Inside, they took an elevator tube up to the offices on the Terminal's top floor, and ended up in chairs around a desk in one of the offices.

All the way in, Ian had said nothing. He sat in his chair now with the same indifferent patience, gazing at Tyburn, behind the desk, and at Breagan, seated back against the wall at the desk's right side. Tyburn found himself staring back in fascination. Not at the granite face, but at the massive, powerful hands of the man, hanging idly between the chair arms that supported his forearms. Tyburn, with an effort, wrenched his gaze from those hands.

"Well, Commandant," he said, forcing himself at last to look up into the dark, unchanging features, "you're here on Earth for a visit, we understand."

"To see the next-of-kin of an officer of mine." Ian's voice, when he spoke at last, was almost mild compared to the rest of his appearance. It was a deep, calm voice, but lightless—like a voice that had long forgotten the need to be angry or threatening. Only . . . there was something sad about it, Tyburn thought.

"A James Kenebuck?" said Tyburn.

"That's right," answered the deep voice of Ian. "His younger brother, Brian Kenebuck, was on my staff in the recent campaign on Freiland. He died three months back."

"Do you," said Tyburn, "always visit your deceased officers' next of kin?"

"When possible. Usually, of course, they die in line of duty."

"I see," said Tyburn. The office chair in which he sat seemed hard and uncomfortable underneath him. He shifted slightly. "You don't happen to be armed, do you, Commandant?"

Ian did not even smile.

"No," he said.

"Of course, of course," said Tyburn, uncomfortable. "Not that it makes any difference." He was looking again, in spite of himself, at the two massive, relaxed hands opposite him. "Your . . . extremities by themselves are lethal weapons. We register professional karate and boxing experts here, you know—or did you know?"

Ian nodded.

"Yes," said Tyburn. He wet his lips, and then was furious with himself for doing so. Damn my orders, he thought suddenly and whitely, I don't have to sit here making a fool of myself in front of this man, no matter how many connections and millions Kenebuck owns.

"All right, look here, Commandant," he said, harshly, leaning forward. "We've had a communication from the Freiland-North Police about you. They suggest that you hold Kenebuck—James Kenebuck—responsible for his brother Brian's death."

Ian sat looking back at him without answering.

"Well," demanded Tyburn, raggedly after a long moment, "do you?"

"Force-leader Brian Kenebuck," said Ian calmly, "led his Force, consisting of thirty-six men at the time, against orders farther than was wise into enemy perimeter. His Force was surrounded and badly shot up. Only he and four men returned to the lines. He was brought to trial in the field under the Mercenaries Code for deliberate mishandling of his troops under combat conditions. The four men who had returned with him testified against him. He was found guilty and I ordered him shot."

Ian stopped speaking. His voice had been perfectly even, but there was so much finality about the way he spoke that after he

finished there was a pause in the room while Tyburn and Breagan stared at him as if they had both been tranced. Then the silence, echoing in Tyburn's ears, jolted him back to life.

"I don't see what all this has to do with James Kenebuck, then," said Tyburn. "Brian committed some . . . military crime, and was executed for it. You say you gave the order. If anyone's responsible for Brian Kenebuck's death then, it seems to me it'd be you. Why connect it with someone who wasn't even there at the time, someone who was here on Earth all the while, James Kenebuck?"

"Brian," said Ian, "was his brother."

The emotionless statement was calm and coldly reasonable in the silent, brightly-lit office. Tyburn found his open hands had shrunk themselves into fists on the desk top. He took a deep breath and began to speak in a flat, official tone.

"Commandant," he said, "I don't pretend to understand you. You're a man of the Dorsai, a product of one of the splinter cultures out among the stars. I'm just an old-fashioned Earthborn—but I'm a policeman in the Manhattan Complex and James Kenebuck is . . . well, he's a taxpayer in the Manhattan Complex."

He found he was talking without meeting Ian's eyes. He forced himself to look at them—they were dark un-moving eyes.

"It's my duty to inform you," Tyburn went on, "that we've had intimations to the effect that you're to bring some retribution to James Kenebuck, because of Brian Kenebuck's death. These are only intimations, and as long as you don't break any laws here on Earth, you're free to go where you want and see whom you like. But this *is Earth, Commandant."*

He paused, hoping that Ian would make some sound, some movement. But Ian only sat there, waiting.

"We don't have any Mercenaries Code here, Commandant," Tyburn went on harshly. "We haven't any feud-right, no *droit-de-main.* But we do have laws. Those laws say that, though a man may be the worst murderer alive, until he's brought to book in our courts, under our process of laws, no one is allowed to harm a hair of his head. Now, I'm not here to argue whether this is the best way or not; just to tell you that that's the way things are." Tyburn stared fixedly into the dark eyes. "Now," he said, bluntly, "I know that if you're determined to try to kill Kenebuck without counting the cost, I can't prevent it."

He paused and waited again. But Ian still said nothing.

"I know," said Tyburn, "that you can walk up to him like any other citizen, and once you're within reach you can try to kill him with your bare hands before anyone can stop you. 1 can't stop you in that case. But what I can do is catch you afterward, if you succeed, and see you convicted and executed for murder. And you *will* be

caught and convicted, there's no doubt about it. You can't kill James Kenebuck the way someone like you would kill a man, and get away with it here on Earth —do you understand that, Commandant?"

"Yes," said Ian.

"All right," said Tyburn, letting out a deep breath. "Then you understand. You're a sane man and a Dorsai professional. From what I've been able to learn about the Dorsai, it's one of your military tenets that part of a man's duty to himself is not to throw his life away in a hopeless cause. And this cause of yours, to bring Kenebuck to justice for his brother's death, is hopeless."

He stopped. Ian straightened in the movement preliminary to getting up.

"Wait a second," said Tyburn.

He had come to the hard part of the interview. He had prepared his speech for this moment and rehearsed it over and over again—but now he found himself without faith that it would convince Ian.

"One more word," said Tyburn. "You're a man of camps and battlefields, a man of the military; and you must be used to thinking of yourself as a pretty effective individual. But here, on Earth, those special skills of yours are mostly illegal. And without them you're ineffective and helpless. Kenebuck, on the other hand, is just the opposite. He's got money—millions. And he's got connections, some of them nasty. And he was born and raised here in Manhattan Complex." Tyburn stared emphatically at the tall, dark man, willing him to understand. "Do you follow me? If you, for example, should suddenly turn up dead here, we just might not be able to bring Kenebuck to book for it. Where we absolutely could, and would, bring you to book if the situation were reversed. Think about it."

He sat, still staring at Ian. But Ian's face showed no change, or sign that the message had gotten through to him.

"Thank you," Ian said. "If there's nothing more, I'll be going."

"There's nothing more," said Tyburn, defeated. He watched Ian leave. It was only when Ian was gone, and he turned back to Breagan, that he recovered a little of his self-respect. For Breagan's face had paled.

Ian went down through the Terminal and took a cab into Manhattan Complex, to the John Adams Hotel. He registered for a room on the fourteenth floor of the transient section of that hotel and inquired about the location of James Kenebuck's suite in the resident section; then sent his card up to Kenebuck with a request to come by to see the millionaire. After that, he went on up to his own room, unpacked his luggage, which had already been delivered from the spaceport, and took out a small, sealed package. Just at that moment there was a soft chiming sound and his card was returned to him from

a delivery slot in the room wall. It fell into the salver below the slot and he picked it up, to read what was written on the face of it. The penciled note read: *Come on up—K.*

He tucked the card and the package into a pocket and left his transient room. And Tyburn, who had followed him to the hotel, and who had been observing all of Ian's actions from the second of his arrival through sensors placed in the walls and ceilings, half rose from his chair in the room of the empty suite directly above Kenebuck's, which had been quietly taken over as a police observation post. Then, helplessly, Tyburn swore and sat down again, to follow Ian's movements in the screen fed by the sensors. So far there was nothing the policeman could do legally—nothing but watch.

So he watched as Ian strode down the softly carpeted hallway to the elevator tube, rose in it to the eightieth floor and stepped out to face the heavy, transparent door sealing off the resident section of the hotel. He held up Kenebuck's card with its message to a concierge screen beside the door, and with a soft sigh of air the door slid back to let him through. He passed on in, found a second elevator tube, and took it up thirteen more stories. Black doors opened before him—and he stepped one step forward into a small foyer to find himself surrounded by three men.

They were big men—one, a lantern-jawed giant, was even bigger than Ian—and they were vicious. Tyburn, watching through the sensor in the foyer ceiling that had been secretly placed there by the police the day before, recognized all of them from his files. They were underworld muscle hired by Kenebuck at word of Ian's coming; all armed, and brutal and hairtrigger—mad dogs of the lower city. After that first step into their midst, Ian stood still. And there followed a strange, unnatural cessation of movement in the room.

The three stood checked. They had been about to put their hands on Ian to search him for something, Tyburn saw, and probably to rough him up in the process. But something had stopped them, some abrupt change in the air around them. Tyburn, watching, felt the change as they did; but for a moment he felt it without understanding. Then understanding came to him.

The difference was in Ian, in the way he stood there. He was, saw Tyburn, simply . . . waiting. That same patient indifference Tyburn had seen upon him in the Terminal office was there again. In the split second of his single step into the room he had discovered the men, had measured them, and stopped. Now, he waited, in his turn, for one of them to make a move.

A sort of black lightning had entered the small foyer. It was abruptly obvious to the watching Tyburn, as to the three below, that the first of them to lay hands on Ian would be the first to find the

hands of the Dorsai soldier upon him—and those hands were death.

For the first time in his life, Tyburn saw the personal power of the Dorsai fighting man, made plain without words. Ian needed no badge upon him, standing as he stood now, to warn that he was dangerous. The men about him were mad dogs; but, patently, Ian was a wolf. There was a difference with the three, which Tyburn now recognized for the first time. Dogs—even mad dogs—fight, and the losing dog, if he can, runs away. But no wolf runs. For a wolf wins every fight but one, and in that one he dies.

After a moment, when it was clear that none of the three would move, Ian stepped forward. He passed through them without even brushing against one of them, to the inner door opposite, and opened it and went on through.

He stepped into a three-level living room stretching to a large, wide window, its glass rolled up, and black with the sleet-filled night. The living room was as large as a small suite in itself, and filled with people, men and women, richly dressed. They held cocktail glasses in their hands as they stood or sat, and talked. The atmosphere was heavy with the scents of alcohol, and women's perfumes and cigarette smoke. It seemed that they paid no attention to his entrance, but their eyes followed him covertly once he had passed.

He walked forward through the crowd, picking his way to a figure before the dark window, the figure of a man almost as tall as himself, erect, athletic-looking with a handsome, sharp-cut face under whitish-blond hair that stared at Ian with a sort of incredulity as Ian approached.

"Graeme . . . ?" said this man, as Ian stopped before him. His voice in this moment of off-guardedness betrayed its two levels, the semi-hoodlum whine and harshness underneath, the polite accents above. "My boys . . . you didn't—" he stumbled, "leave anything with them when you were coming in?"

"No," said Ian. "You're James Kenebuck, of course. You look like your brother." Kenebuck stared at him.

"Just a minute," he said. He set down his glass, turned and went quickly through the crowd and into the foyer, shutting the door behind him. In the hush of the room, those there heard, first silence then a short, unintelligible burst of sharp voices, then silence again. Kenebuck came back into the room, two spots of angry color high on his cheekbones. He came back to face Ian.

"Yes," he said, halting before Ian. "They were supposed to . . . tell me when you came in." He fell silent, evidently waiting for Ian to speak, but Ian merely stood, examining him, until the spots of color on Kenebuck's cheekbones flared again.

"Well?" he said, abruptly. "Well? You came here to see me about

Brian, didn't you? What about Brian?" He added, before Ian could answer, in a tone suddenly brutal. "I know he was shot, so you don't have to break that news to me. I suppose you want to tell me he showed all sorts of noble guts—refused a blindfold and that sort of—"

"No," said Ian. "He didn't die nobly."

Kenebuck's tall, muscled body jerked a little at the words, almost as if the bullets of an invisible firing squad had poured into it.

"Well . . . that's fine!" he laughed angrily. "You come light-years to see me and then you tell me that! I thought you liked him—liked Brian."

"Liked him? No." Ian shook his head. Kenebuck stiffened, his face for a moment caught in a gape of bewilderment. "As a matter of fact," went on Ian, "he was a glory hunter. That made him a poor soldier and a worse officer. I'd have transferred him out of my command if I'd had time before the campaign on Frieland started. Because of him, we lost the lives of thirty-two men in his Force, that night."

"Oh." Kenebuck pulled himself together, and looked sourly at Ian. "Those thirty-two men. You've got them on your conscience, is that it?"

"No," said Ian. There was no emphasis on the word as he said it, but somehow to Tyburn's ears above, the brief short negative dismissed Kenebuck's question with an abruptness like contempt. The spots of color on Kenebuck's cheeks flamed.

"You didn't like Brian and your conscience doesn't bother you—what're you here for, then?" he snapped.

"My duty brings me," said Ian.

"Duty?" Kenebuck's face stilled, and went rigid.

Ian reached slowly into his pocket as if he were surrendering a weapon under the guns of an enemy and did not want his move misinterpreted. He brought out the package from his pocket.

"I brought you Brian's personal effects," he said. He turned and laid the package on a table beside Kenebuck. Kenebuck stared down at the package and the color over his cheekbones faded until his face was nearly as pale as his hair. Then slowly, hesitantly, as if he were approaching a booby-trap, he reached out and gingerly picked it up. He held it and turned to Ian, staring into Ian's eyes, almost demandingly.

"It's in here?" said Kenebuck, in a voice barely above a whisper, and with a strange emphasis.

"Brian's effects," said Ian, watching him.

"Yes . . . sure. All right," said Kenebuck. He was plainly trying to pull himself together, but his voice was still almost whispering. "I guess...that settles it."

"That settles it," said Ian. Their eyes held together, "Good-by,"

said Ian. He turned and walked back through the silent crowd and out of the living room. The three muscle men were no longer in the foyer. He took the elevator tube down and returned to his own hotel room.

Tyburn, who, with a key to the service elevators, had not had to change tubes on the way down as Ian had, was waiting for him when Ian entered. Ian did not seem surprised to see Tyburn there, and only glanced casually at the policeman as he crossed to a decanter of Dorsai whiskey that had since been delivered up to the room.

"That's that, then!" burst out Tyburn, in relief. "You got in to see him and he ended up letting you out. You can pack up and go, now. It's over."

"No," said Ian. "Nothing's over yet." He poured a few inches of the pungent, dark whiskey into a glass, and moved the decanter over another glass. "Drink?"

"I'm on duty," said Tyburn, sharply.

"There'll be a little wait," said Ian, calmly. He poured some whiskey into the other glass, took up both glasses, and stepped across the room to hand one to Tyburn. Tyburn found himself holding it. Ian had stepped on to stand before the wall-high window. Outside, night had fallen; but—faintly seen in the lights from the city levels below—the sleet here above the weather shield still beat like small, dark ghosts against the transparency.

"Hang it, man, what more do you want?" burst out Tyburn. "Can't you see it's you I'm trying to protect—as well as Kenebuck? I don't want *anyone* killed! If you stay around here now, you're asking for it. I keep telling you, here in Manhattan Complex you're the helpless one, not Kenebuck. Do you think he hasn't made plans to take care of you?"

"Not until he's sure," said Ian, turning from the ghost-sleet, beating like lost souls against the windowglass, trying to get in.

"Sure about what? Look, Commandant," said Tyburn, trying to speak calmly, "half an hour after we hear from the Freiland-North Police about you, Kenebuck called my office to ask for police protection." He broke off, angrily. "Don't look at me like that! How do I know how he found out you were coming? I tell you he's rich, and he's got connections! But the point is, the police protection he's got is just a screen—an excuse—for whatever he's got planned for you on his own. You saw those hoods in the foyer!"

"Yes," said Ian, unemotionally.

"Well, think about it!" Tyburn glared at him. "Look, I don't hold any grief for James Kenebuck! All right—let me tell you about him! We knew he'd been trying to get rid of his brother since Brian was ten—but blast it, Commandant, Brian was no angel, either—"

"I know," said Ian, seating himself in a chair opposite Tyburn.

“All right, you know! I’ll tell you anyway!” said Tyburn. “Their grandfather was a local kingpin—he was in every racket on the eastern seaboard. He was one of the mob, with millions he didn’t dare count because of where they’d come from. In their father’s time, those millions started to be fed into legitimate businesses. The third generation, James and Brian, didn’t inherit anything that wasn’t legitimate. Hell, we couldn’t even make a jaywalking ticket stick against one of them, if we’d ever wanted to. James was twenty and Brian ten when their father died, and when he died the last bit of tattle-tale gray went out of the family linen. But they kept their hoodlum connections, Commandant!”

Ian sat, glass in hand, watching Tyburn almost curiously.

“Don’t you get it?” snapped Tyburn. “I tell you that, on paper, in law, Kenebuck’s twenty-four-carat gilt-edge. But his family was hoodlum, he was raised like a hoodlum, and he thinks like a hood! He didn’t want his young brother Brian around to share the crown-prince position with him— so he set out to get rid of him. He couldn’t just have him killed, so he set out to cut him down, show him up, break his spirit, until Brian took one chance too many trying to match up to his older brother, and killed himself off.”

Ian slowly nodded.

“All right!” said Tyburn. “So Kenebuck finally succeeded. He chased Brian until the kid ran off and became a professional soldier—something Kenebuck wouldn’t leave his wine, women and song long enough to shine at. And he can shine at most things he really wants to shine at, Commandant. Under that hood attitude and all those millions, he’s got a good mind and a good body that he’s made a hobby out of training. But, all right. So now it turns out Brian was still no good, and he took some soldiers along when he finally got around to doing what Kenebuck wanted, and getting himself killed. All right! But what can you do about it? What can anyone do about it, with all the connections, and all the money and all the law on Kenebuck’s side of it? And, why should you think about doing something about it, anyway?”

“It’s my duty,” said Ian. He had swallowed half the whiskey in his glass, absently, and now he turned the glass thoughtfully around, watching the brown liquor swirl under the forces of momentum and gravity. He looked up at Tyburn. “You know that, Lieutenant.”

“Duty! Is duty that important?” demanded Tyburn. Ian gazed at him, then looked away, at the ghost-sleet beating vainly against the glass of the window that held it back in the outer dark.

“Nothing’s more important than duty,” said Ian, half to himself, his voice thoughtful and remote. “Mercenary troops have the right to care and protection from their own officers. When they don’t get it,

they're entitled to justice, so that the same thing is discouraged from happening again. That justice is a duty."

Tyburn blinked, and unexpectedly a wall seemed to go down in his mind.

"Justice for those thirty-two dead soldiers of Brian's!" he said, suddenly understanding. "That's what brought you here!"

"Yes." Ian nodded, and lifted his glass almost as if to the sleet-ghosts to drink the rest of his whiskey.

"But," said Tyburn, staring at him, "you're trying to bring a civilian to justice. And Kenebuck has you out-gunned and out-maneuvered—"

The chiming of the communicator screen in one corner of the hotel room interrupted him. Ian put down his empty glass, went over to the screen and depressed a stud. His wide shoulders and back hid the screen from Tyburn, but Tyburn heard his voice.

"Yes?"

The voice of James Kenebuck sounded in the hotel room.

"Graeme—listen!"

There was a pause.

"I'm listening," said Ian, calmly.

"I'm alone now," said the voice of Kenebuck. It was tight and harsh. "My guests have gone home. I was just looking through that package of Brian's things . . ." He stopped speaking and the sentence seemed to Tyburn to dangle unfinished in the air of the hotel room. Ian let it dangle for a long moment.

"Yes?" he said, finally.

"Maybe I was a little hasty . . ." said Kenebuck. But the tone of his voice did not match the words. The tone was savage. "Why don't you come up, now that I'm alone, and we'll . . . talk about Brian, after all?"

"I'll be up," said Ian.

He snapped off the screen and turned around.

"Wait!" said Tyburn, starting up out of his chair. "You can't go up there!"

"Can't?" Ian looked at him. "I've been invited, Lieutenant."

The words were like a damp towel slapping Tyburn in the face, waking him up.

"That's right . . ." he stared at Ian. "Why? Why'd he invite you back?"

"He's had time," said Ian, "to be alone. And to look at that package of Brian's."

"But . . ." Tyburn scowled. "There was nothing important in that package. A watch, a wallet, a passport, some other papers . . . Customs gave us a list. There wasn't anything unusual there."

"Yes," said Ian. "And that's why he wants to see me again."

"But what does he want?"

"He wants me," said Ian. He met the puzzlement of Tyburn's gaze. "He was always jealous of Brian," Ian explained, almost gently. "He was afraid Brian would grow up to outdo him in things. That's why he tried to break Brian, even to kill him. But now Brian's come back to face him."

"Brian . . . ?"

"In me," said Ian. He turned toward the hotel door.

Tyburn watched him turn, then suddenly—like a man coming out of a daze, he took three hurried strides after him as Ian opened the door.

"Wait!" snapped Tyburn. "He won't be alone up there! He'll have hoods covering you through the walls. He'll definitely have traps set for you . . ."

Easily, Ian lifted the policeman's grip from his arm.

"I know," he said. And went.

Tyburn was left in the open doorway, staring after him. As Ian stepped into the elevator tube, the policeman moved. He ran for the service elevator that would take him back to the police observation post above the sensors in the ceiling of Kenebuck's living room.

When Ian stepped into the foyer the second time, it was empty. He went to the door to the living room of Kenebuck's suite, found it ajar, and stepped through it. Within the room was empty, with glasses and overflowing ashtrays still on the tables; the lights had been lowered. Kenebuck rose from a chair with its back to the far, large window at the end of the room. Ian walked toward him and stopped when they were little more than an arm's length apart.

Kenebuck stood for a second, staring at him, the skin of his face tight. Then he made a short almost angry gesture with his right hand. The gesture gave away the fact that he had been drinking.

"Sit down!" he said. Ian took a comfortable chair and Kenebuck sat down in the one from which he had just risen. "Drink?" said Kenebuck. There were a decanter and glasses on the table beside and between them. Ian shook his head. Kenebuck poured part of a glass for himself.

"The package of Brian's things," he said, abruptly, the whites of his eyes glinting as he glanced up under his lids at Ian, "there was just personal stuff. Nothing else in it!"

"What else did you expect would be in it?" asked Ian, calmly.

Kenebuck's hands clenched suddenly on the glass. He stared at Ian, and then burst out into a laugh that rang a little wildly against the emptiness of the large room.

"No, no . . ." said Kenebuck, loudly. "I'm asking the questions,

Graeme. I'll ask them! What made you come all the way here, to see me, anyway?"

"My duty," said Ian.

"Duty? Duty to whom—Brian?" Kenebuck looked as if he would laugh again, then thought better of it. There was the white, wild flash of his eyes again. "What was something like Brian to you? You said you didn't even like him."

"That was beside the point," said Ian, quietly. "He was one of my officers."

"One of your officers! He was my brother! That's more than being one of your officers!"

"Not," answered Ian in the same voice, "where justice is concerned."

"Justice?" Kenebuck laughed. "Justice for Brian? Is that it?"

"And for thirty-two enlisted men."

"Oh—" Kenebuck snorted laughingly. "Thirty-two men . . . those thirty-two men!" He shook his head. "I never knew your thirty-two men, Graeme, so you can't blame me for them. That was Brian's fault; him and his idea— what was the charge they tried him on? Oh, yes, that he and his thirty-two or thirty-six men could raid enemy Headquarters and come back with the enemy Commandant. Come back . . . covered with glory." Kenebuck laughed. "But it didn't work. Not my fault."

"Brian did it," said Ian, "to show you. You were what made him do it."

"Me? Could I help it if he never could match up to me?" Kenebuck stared down at his glass and took a quick swallow from it then went back to cuddling it in his hands. He smiled a little to himself. "Never could even *catch* up to me." He looked whitely across at Ian. "I'm just a better man, Graeme. You better remember that."

Ian said nothing. Kenebuck continued to stare at him; and slowly Kenebuck's face grew more savage.

"Don't believe me, do you?" said Kenebuck, softly. "You better believe me. I'm not Brian, and I'm not bothered by Dorsais. You're here, and I'm facing you—alone."

"Alone?" said Ian. For the first time Tyburn, above the ceiling over the heads of the two men, listening and watching through hidden sensors, thought he heard a hint of emotion—contempt—in Ian's voice. Or had he imagined it?

"Alone—Well!" James Kenebuck laughed again, but a little cautiously. "I'm a civilized man, not a hick frontiersman. But I don't have to be a fool. Yes, I've got men covering you from behind the walls of the room here. I'd be stupid not to. And I've got this . . ." He whistled, and something about the size of a small dog, but made of

smooth, black metal, slipped out from behind a sofa nearby and slid on an aircushion over the carpeting to their feet.

Ian looked down. It was a sort of satchel with an orifice in the top from which two metallic tentacles protruded slightly.

Ian nodded slightly.

"A medical mech," he said.

"Yes," said Kenebuck, "cued to respond to the heartbeats of anyone in the room with it. So you see, it wouldn't do you any good, even if you somehow knew where all my guards were and beat them to the draw. Even if you killed me, this could get to me in time to keep it from being permanent. So, I'm unkillable. Give up!" He laughed and kicked at the mech. "Get back," he said to it. It slid back behind the sofa.

"So you see . . ." he said. "Just sensible precautions. There's no trick to it. You're a military man—and what's that mean? Superior strength. Superior tactics. That's all. So I outpower your strength, outnumber you, make your tactics useless—and what are you? Nothing." He put his glass carefully aside on the table with the decanter. "But I'm not Brian. I'm not afraid of you. I could do without these things if I wanted to."

Ian sat watching him. On the floor above, Tyburn had stiffened.

"Could you?" asked Ian.

Kenebuck stared at him. The white face of the millionaire contorted. Blood surged up into it darkening it. His eyes flashed whitely.

"What're you trying to do—test me?" he shouted suddenly. He jumped to his feet and stood over Ian, waving his arms furiously. It was, recognized Tyburn overhead, the calculated, self-induced hysterical rage of the hoodlum world. But how would Ian Graeme below know that? Suddenly, Kenebuck was screaming. "You want to try me out? You think I won't face you? You think I'll back down like that brother of mine, that . . ." He broke into a flood of obscenity in which the name of Brian was freely mixed. Abruptly, he whirled about to the walls of the room yelling at them. "Get out of there. All right, out! Do you hear me? All of you! Out—"

Panels slid back, bookcases swung aside and four men stepped into the room. Three were those who had been in the foyer earlier when Ian had entered for the first time. The other was of the same type.

"Out!" screamed Kenebuck at them. "Everybody out. Outside, and lock the door behind you. I'll show this Dorsai, this . . ." Almost foaming at the mouth, he lapsed into obscenity again.

Overhead, above the ceiling, Tyburn found himself gripping the edge of the table below the observation screen so hard his fingers

ached.

"It's a trick!" he muttered between his teeth to the un-hearing Ian. "He planned it this way! Can't you see that?"

"Graeme armed?" inquired the police sensor technician at Tyburn's right. Tyburn jerked his head around momentarily to stare at the technician.

"No," said Tyburn. "Why?"

"Kenebuck is." The technician reached over and tapped the screen, just below the left shoulder of Kenebuck's jacket image. "Slugthrower."

Tyburn made a fist of his aching right fingers and softly pounded the table before the screen in frustration.

"All right!" Kenebuck was shouting below, turning back to the still-seated form of Ian, and spreading his arms wide. "Now's your chance. Jump me! The door's locked. You think there's anyone else near to help me? Look!" He turned and took five steps to the wide, knee-high-to-ceiling window behind him, punched the control button and watched as it swung wide. A few of the whirling sleet-ghosts outside drove from out of ninety stories of vacancy, into the opening —and fell dead in little drops of moisture on the window-sill as the automatic weather shield behind the glass blocked them out.

He stalked back to Ian, who had neither moved nor changed expression through all this. Slowly, Kenebuck sank back down into his chair, his back to the night, the blocked-out cold and the sleet.

"What's the matter?" he asked, slowly, acidly. "You don't do anything? Maybe *you* don't have the nerve, Graeme?"

"We were talking about Brian," said Ian.

"Yes, Brian . . ." Kenebuck said, quite slowly. "He had a big head. He wanted to be like me, but no matter how he tried—how I tried to help him—he couldn't make it." He stared at Ian. "That's just the way, he never could make it—the way he decided to go into enemy lines when there wasn't a chance in the world. That's the way he was—a loser."

"With help," said Ian.

"What? What's that you're saying?" Kenebuck jerked upright in his chair.

"You helped him lose," Ian's voice was matter-of-fact. "From the time he was a young boy, you built him up to want to be like you—to take long chances and win. Only your chances were always safe bets, and his were as unsafe as you could make them."

Kenebuck drew in an audible, hissing breath.

"You've got a big mouth, Graeme!" he said, in a low, slow voice.

"You wanted," said Ian, almost conversationally, "to have him kill himself off. But he never quite did. And each time he came back for

more, because he had it stuck into his mind, carved into his mind, that he wanted to impress you—even though by the time he was grown, he saw what you were up to. He knew, but he still wanted to make you admit that he wasn't a loser. You'd twisted him that way while he was growing up, and that was the way he grew."

"Go on," hissed Kenebuck. "Go on, big mouth."

"So, he went off-Earth and became a professional soldier," went on Ian, steadily and calmly. "Not because he was drafted like someone from Newton or a born professional from the Dorsai, or hungry like one of the ex-miners from Coby. But to show you you were wrong about him. He found one place where you couldn't compete with him, and he must have started writing back to you to tell you about it—half rubbing it in, half asking for the pat on the back you never gave him."

Kenebuck sat in the chair and breathed. His eyes were all one glitter.

"But you didn't answer his letters," said Ian. "I suppose you thought that'd make him desperate enough to finally do something fatal. But he didn't. Instead he succeeded. He went up through the ranks. Finally, he got his commission and made Force leader, and you began to be worried. It wouldn't be long, if he kept on going up, before he'd be above the field officer grades, and out of most of the actual fighting."

Kenebuck sat perfectly still, a little leaning forward. He looked almost as if he were praying, or putting all the force of his mind to willing that Ian finish what he had started to say.

"And so," said Ian, "on his twenty-third birthday—which was the day before the night on which he led his men against orders into the enemy area—you saw that he got this birthday card . . ." He reached into a side pocket of his civilian jacket and took out a white, folded card that showed signs of having been savagely crumpled but was now smoothed out again. Ian opened it and laid it beside the decanter on the table between their chairs, the sketch and legend facing Kenebuck. Kenebuck's eyes dropped to look at it.

The sketch was a crude outline of a rabbit, with a combat rifle and battle helmet discarded at its feet, engaged in painting a broad yellow stripe down the center of its own back. Underneath this picture was printed in block letters, the question—"why fight it?"

Kenebuck's face slowly rose from the sketch to face Ian, and the millionaire's mouth stretched at the corners, and went on stretching into a ghastly version of a smile.

"Was that all ... ?" whispered Kenebuck.

"Not all," said Ian. "Along with it, glued to the paper by the rabbit, there was this—"

He reached almost casually into his pocket.

“No, you don’t!” screamed Kenebuck triumphantly. Suddenly he was on his feet, jumping behind his chair, backing away toward the darkness of the window behind him. He reached into his jacket and his hand came out holding the slugthrower, which cracked loudly in the room. Ian had not moved, and his body jerked to the heavy impact of the slug.

Suddenly, Ian had come to life. Incredibly, after being hammered by a slug, the shock of which should have immobilized an ordinary man, Ian was out of the chair on his feet and moving forward. Kenebuck screamed again— this time with pure terror—and began to back away, firing as he went.

“Die, you—! Die!” he screamed. But the towering Dorsai figure came on. Twice it was hit and spun clear around by the heavy slugs, but like a football fullback shaking off the assaults of tacklers, it plunged on, with great strides narrowing the distance between it and the retreating Kenebuck.

Screaming finally, Kenebuck came up with the back of his knees against the low sill of the open window. For a second his face distorted itself out of all human shape in a grimace of its terror. He looked, to right and to left, but there was no place left to run. He had been pulling the trigger of his slugthrower all this time, but now the firing pin clicked at last upon an empty chamber. Gibbering, he threw the weapon at Ian, and it flew wide of the driving figure of the Dorsai, now almost upon him, great hands outstretched.

Kenebuck jerked his head away from what was rushing toward him. Then, with a howl like a beaten dog, he turned and flung himself through the window before those hands could touch him, into ninety-odd stories of unsupported space. And his howl carried away down into silence.

Ian halted. For a second he stood before the window, his right hand still clenched about whatever it was he had pulled from his pocket. Then, like a toppling tree, he fell.

—As Tyburn and the technician with him finished burning through the ceiling above and came dropping through the charred opening into the room. They almost landed on the small object that had come rolling from Ian’s now lax hand. An object that was really two objects glued together. A small paintbrush and a transparent tube of glaringly yellow paint.

* * * *

“I hope you realize, though,” said Tyburn, two weeks later on an icy, bright December day as he and the recovered Ian stood just inside

the Terminal waiting for the boarding signal from the spaceliner about to take off for the Sirian worlds, “what a chance you took with Kenebuck. It was just luck it worked out for you the way it did.”

“No,” said Ian. He was as apparently emotionless as ever; a little more gaunt from his stay in the Manhattan hospital, but he had mended with the swiftness of his Dorsai constitution. “There was no luck. It all happened the way I planned it.”

Tyburn gazed in astonishment.

“Why . . .” he said, “if Kenebuck hadn’t had to send his hoods out of the room to make it seem necessary for him to shoot you himself when you put your hand into your pocket that second time—or if you hadn’t had the card in the first place—” He broke off, suddenly thoughtful. “You mean . . . ?” he stared at Ian. “Having the card, you planned to have Kenebuck get you alone ... ?”

“It was a form of personal combat,” said Ian. “And personal combat is my business. You assumed that Kenebuck was strongly entrenched, facing my attack. But it was the other way around.”

“But you had to come to him—”

“I had to appear to come to him,” said Ian, almost coldly. “Otherwise he wouldn’t have believed that he had to kill me—before I killed him. By his decision to kill me, he put himself in the attacking position.”

“But he had all the advantages!” said Tyburn, his head whirling. “You had to fight on his ground, here where he was strong . . .”

“No,” said Ian. “You’re confusing the attack position with the defensive one. By coming here, I put Kenebuck in the position of finding out whether I actually had the birthday card, and the knowledge of why Brian had gone against orders into enemy territory that night. Kenebuck planned to have his men in the foyer shake me down for the card— but they lost their nerve.”

“I remember,” murmured Tyburn.

“Then, when I handed him the package, he was sure the card was in it. But it wasn’t,” went on Ian. “He saw his only choice was to give me a situation where I might feel it was safe to admit having the card and the knowledge. He had to know about that, because Brian had called his bluff by going out and risking his neck after getting the card. The fact Brian was tried and executed later made no difference to Kenebuck. That was a matter of law—something apart from hoodlum guts, or lack of guts. If no one knew that Brian was braver than his older brother, that was all right; but if I knew, he could only save face under his own standards by killing me.”

“He almost did,” said Tyburn. “Any one of those slugs—”

“There was the medical mech,” said Ian, calmly. “A man like Kenebuck would be bound to have something like that around to play

safe—just as he would be bound to set an amateur's trap." The boarding horn of the spaceliner sounded. Ian picked up his luggage bag. "Good-by," he said, offering his hand to Tyburn.

"Good-by ..." he muttered. "So you were just going along with Kenebuck's trap, all of it. I can't believe it . . ." He released Ian's hand and watched as the big man swung around and took the first two strides away toward the bulk of the ship shining in the winter sunlight. Then, suddenly, the numbness broke clear from Tyburn's mind. He ran after Ian and caught at his arm. Ian stopped and swung half-around, frowning slightly.

"I can't believe it!" cried Tyburn. "You mean you went up there, knowing Kenebuck was going to pump you full of slugs and maybe kill you—all just to square things for thirty-two enlisted soldiers under the command of a man you didn't even like? I don't believe it—you can't be that cold-blooded! I don't care how much of a man of the military you are!"

Ian looked down at him. And it seemed to Tyburn that the Dorsai face had gone away from him, somehow become as remote and stony as a face carved high up on some icy mountain's top.

"But I'm not just a man of the military," Ian said. "That was the mistake Kenebuck made, too. That was why he thought that stripped of military elements, I'd be easy to kill."

Tyburn, looking at him, felt a chill run down his spine as icy as wind off a glacier.

"Then, in heaven's name," cried Tyburn. "What are you?"

Ian looked from his far distance down into Tyburn's eyes and the sadness rang as clear in his voice finally, as iron-shod heels on barren rock.

"I am a man of war," said Ian, softly. . With that, he turned and went on; and Tyburn saw him black against the winter-bright sky, looming over all the other departing passengers, on his way to board the spaceship.

Wars, and rumors of wars . . .

Not since the 1948-1950 period of intense activity by the World Federalists and the Association of Atomic Scientists has there been so much concentration on war themes in speculative writing. But there is a difference.

The pre-Korean stories were, by and large, prophetic warnings: end-of-the-world, or atomic-mutation, or back-to-barbarism themes. There are still elements of this, but the emphasis has shifted in a way both hopeful and dismaying.

Dismaying, because the crusaders are no longer with us: None of these writers seems to be working out of any belief that the *war-*

situation (“dirty little wars” and “police actions”; perpetual disarmament conferences; missile-gap measurements; hot-lines and panic-buttons; coalitions and realignments; threats and retaliations) will get better before it gets worse.

Hopeful, because (with the loss of the bright-lining thought that the too terrible weapon *had* actually been discovered) the approach is now more analytical than agit-prop, more sociological than polemic; concerned with the motives and mores of war, and with the psychological and cultural causes and effects. Why *do* we *do this thing? And what does it do to us?*

Gordon Dickson initiated an extensive exploration of the military culture and the psychology of the fighting man with his explosive novel *Dorsail* in 1959. Since then, he and others have worked the same basic material in a number of interesting ways—but none, to my taste, so effectively or excitingly as the Dorsai series. (A new novel. *Soldier, Ask* Not, will be published shortly by Delacorte.)

Within the field, the only notable attempts at examination of war-directed forces at work in our own culture have been those of Mack Reynolds and John Brunner. But from points all around the perimeter recently, there has come a steady peppering of fantasy, parable, and allegory, turning an analytic (and usually sardonic) eye on the behavior of nations—especially our own—and the wondrous workings of what we still oddly call “diplomacy.” (Tom Lehrer’s “Send the Marines”: . . . *For might makes right./Until they’ve seen the light,/They’ve got to be protected,/All their rights respected,/Till* someone we *like is elected* . . . And then there was Dean Acheson’s parable “The Fairy Princess” in the *Reporter.* And of course Abram Tertz’s *The Makepeace Experiment* from Pantheon.)

* * * *

MARS IS OURS!
ART BUCHWALD

When it was discovered by American and Russian space probes that there was indeed life on Mars, an immediate foreign ministers' conference in Geneva was called to decide what to do about it.

The United States, through its Secretary of State, announced that America had no territorial designs on the planet and the U.S. position was that the Martians should be free to choose their own government, providing of course that it was not Communist-dominated or leftist-inspired.

The Soviet minister said that if the Martians wanted to overthrow the reactionary rulers who were probably exploiting the Martian masses, his country would have no choice but to come to their aid. He said that if the Martians requested it, the Soviet Union would supply them with planes, rockets, and up-to-date radar.

The United States said that if the Soviet Union interfered, it would have no choice but to send Marines to Mars to protect the lives of free Martians as well as American tourists who would soon be visiting there.

The real problem was that nobody knew what kind of government the Martians had.

All the photographs showed that there was life on Mars, but unfortunately there were no flags in the pictures to indicate where the Martians stood.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States were at a stalemate until someone came up with a brilliant solution.

Mars would be divided in half. The northern part would be known as North Viet-Mars and the south would be known as South Viet-Mars.

The Soviets would be in charge of the North, the U.S. in charge of the South, and free elections would be promised within two years of partition.

The United States immediately set up a Mars aid program to give the Martians economic and financial assistance when the time came. It also trained military-assistance teams which would land with the aid people and train the Martians in defense against the North.

The Soviets divided North Viet-Mars into communes and trained political commissars and technicians to go into the country and communize it.

* * * *

In the meantime, Communist China, which had not been asked to the conference, started making its own plans for Mars. It announced an Afro-Asian-Mars Conference to take place in Peking, where both the Western "bandits" and the Soviet "deviationists" would be attacked. China said, as soon as it had enough spaceships, it would send one million Chinese volunteers to Mars to save the planet from American and Soviet imperialism.

Although the French had nothing to do with the space explorations, they insisted Mars should become part of a Third Force under the direction of General de Gaulle.

Unbeknownst to the great powers on Earth, the Martians were holding a summit meeting of their own on the Mars Bar Canal.

"Then it is agreed upon," the Grand Clyde of Mare Cimmerium said. "We shall set up an East Earth and a West Earth. We shall have the East, and Trivium Charontis will have the West."

The Trivium Charontis Super Zilch said, "We shall hold elections within two years and let the Earth people decide for themselves what form of government they want."

"I cannot state strongly enough," said the Grand Clyde of Mare Cimmerium, "that if Trivium Charontis does anything to violate the treaty we will be forced to use all the weapons at our disposal."

"And I can assure you, Grand Clyde, Trivium Charontis will not stand by and see West Earthlings swallowed up by Mare Cimmerium. If need be, we shall use the clong."

The Grand Clyde said, "We shall see which system prevails."

Art Buchwald writes from Washington, these days. But back in 1948, Buchwald, an ex-Marine, was in Paris, working for the *Herald-Tribune.* Another young American, an ex-bomber pilot, was camping out on the steps of the Palais de Chaillot in the middle of Paris, but technically not in France at all, because the building had just been declared international territory, the domain of the new United Nations. Garry Davis had proclaimed himself a World Citizen and was demanding citizenship papers of the UN.

To many of us, in those apocalyptic days, Garry Davis was a symbol of—literally—life or death. To most of the American press he was just one more loose nut. As I recall, Buchwald was one of the few newsmen published here who seemed to comprehend the wonderful and terrible myth Davis was acting out.

We did not win our One World. Not with Davis' intuitive dramas not with the scientists' naive sanity. Today we seem farther than ever from the name—yet the game (between Crises) appears virtually in

our hands. The world shrinks daily. Global communications and transportation pull us together in shared language, handicrafts, entertainment, cuisine, and personal contact—while the growing pressure of our awed awareness of the immensity of the universe pushes at us from outside, turning us toward each other.

* * * *

Looking for biographical material on Brian Aldiss, I found instead my first letter from him, in February, 1959:

So Oxford fascinates you? What effect do you think "Pike County" has on me? Oxford *these days is a beautiful and exciting city—very lively, one facet of it resembling exactly a dour, congested. Midland town, with big cinemas and traffic jams and Morris Motors, making the university side look like its Latin quarter. But the other side of it, the side that contains thirty-one colleges and a* wedge of *beautiful living and buildings, is even more exciting. And you can see both sides at once. 80,000 people live here....*

Morris Motors? Factories? Cinemas? 80,000 people? This had nothing to do with the Oxford I knew, from three centuries of English literature. Not that it mattered: I could keep my pretty picture. I would never see the *reality.*

Last year I saw Oxford. I went to England, for a World Science Fiction Convention. (Brian Aldiss was guest of honor.)

The convention took me there, but London kept me: I went for two weeks; and stayed two months—and of course went up to Oxford (as in all those British novels) for a weekend. It is everything Brian said, and everything those English novels promised, too. (*Nothing* had prepared me for the House of 12th-century Wood-Carvings and Stuffed Birds, home of Bonfiglioli and *Impulse.)*

Six months later, Aldiss' publishers brought him here to receive in person one of the first annual SFWA awards. The Aldisses came out to Pike County for a weekend, and I took them for my favorite long drive through the Pocono foothills and back along the Delaware River, on the Hawks' Nest Drive, into Port Jervis—where the Silver Grill, has an all-jazz, and ail-good, jukebox. (Margaret Aldiss had never played a jukebox.)

The other day I had a letter from Brian:

. . . We *know how you feel about England; we feel that way about the States—well, the 0.0001%* of *it we saw. We'll be back. And we do thank you for the time we spent with you, and the lick of American myth we saw through your eyes. . . .*

The globe is getting smaller, as the universe gets bigger.

(Who Can Replace a Man? Best SF Stories of Brian Aldiss should be just out from Harcourt, Brace, and World.)

* * * *

SCARFE'S WORLD
BRIAN W. ALDISS

I

Young Dyak and Utliff with the panting breath stood on the seamed brow of the hill. It was a fine hot day, with a million cicadas thrilling about them like the heat itself. Under the heat haze, the far mountains were scarcely visible, so that the river that wound its way down from them held a leaden grayness until it got close to the foot of their hill.

At the foot of the hill, it flattened out into swamps, particularly on the far side where marshy land faded eventually into mist. The iguanodons were croaking and quacking by the water's edge, their familiar lumpy shapes visible. They would not trouble the men.

"How is it with you Utliff? Are you coming down the hill with me?" Dyak asked.

He saw by Utliff's face that there was something wrong with him. The lie of his features had altered. His expression was distorted, changed in a way Dyak did not like; even his bushy beard hung differently this morning. Utliff shrugged his thick shoulders.

"I will not let you hunt alone, friend," he said.

Determined to show his imperviousness to suffering, he started first down the sandy slope, sliding among the bushes as they had often done. He was pretending to be indifferent to an illness to which no man could be indifferent. With a flash of compassion, Dyak saw that Utliff was not long for this life.

Glancing back, Utliff saw his friend's expression.

"One more runner for the pot, Dyak, before I go," he said, and he turned his eyes away from his friend.

Living things scuttled out of the bush as they headed toward the river, the furred things that were too fast to catch, and a couple of the reptiles they called runners—little fleet lizards, waist-high, which sped along on their hind legs.

Utliff had a crude pouch full of stones at his side. He threw hard at the runners as they went, hitting one but not stopping it. Both men laughed. They were in no desperate need for food. There was always plenty; and besides, hunting runners was done more easily from the bottom of the hill, as they knew from experience.

They pulled up in a cloud of dust at the bottom, still laughing. At this time of day, high noon, there was nothing to fear. In fact there were only the crunchers to fear at any time, and crunchers stayed supine in the shade at this period of heat. The quackers over in the swamp hurt nobody unless they were molested. It was a good life.

True, there came silent moments of fear, moments—as when one

looked at Utliff's distorted face—when unease crawled like a little animal inside one's skull. But then one could generally run off and hunt something, and do a little killing and feel good again.

Dyak disliked thinking. The things that came from the head were bad, those from the body mainly good. With a whoop, he ran through the long grass and hurled himself in a dive over the steep bank and into the river. The river swallowed him, sweetly singing. He came to the surface gasping and shaking the water from his eyes. The water was deep under him, in a channel scoured by the river as it curved along its course, and it flowed warm and pure. It spoke to his body. On the opposite bank, where the quacker herd now plunged in confusion at his appearance, it was staled and too hot.

Letting out a shriek of delight, Dyak fought the satin currents that wrapped his body and called to his friend. Utliff stood mutely on the miniature cliff, staring across at Dyak.

"Come on in! You'll feel better!"

Before Utliff obediently jumped, Dyak took in the whole panorama. Afterwards, it remained stamped on his mind.

Behind his friend stood the hillside that none of them had ever climbed, though their dwelling caves tunneled into the lower slopes. He noted that three women from the settlement stood there, clutching each other in the way women always did and laughing. On the heavy air, their sounds were just audible. In the evening, they would come down to the river and bathe and splash each other, laughing because they had forgotten (or because they remembered?) that the dark was coming on. Dyak felt a mild pleasure at their laughter. It meant that their stomachs were full and their heads empty. They were content.

Behind Utliff to the other side, Dyak saw Semary appear and stand unobtrusively in a position where she could watch the two men from behind a tree. Semary was smiling, although she did not laugh as frequently as the other women. No doubt the noise had attracted her from her own settlement. Though Dyak and Utliff knew little about her, they knew this girl was for some reason something of an outcast from her own people, the three men and three women who lived toward the place where the cruncher had its current den.

Dyak stopped smiling when he saw her. It hurt him to look at Semary.

She was less corpulent and bowed than any other women he had seen. On her face was not even an incipient mustache, such as sometimes blossomed on the lips of other women; nor was there hair between her breasts. Though all this was strange, it was the strangeness that attracted. And yet—to be with her hurt. He knew this from the times when Utliff and he had stayed with her; and from that time, he knew too that she was passive, and did not fight and bite and

laugh as the other women did when they had hold of you.

The being with her and the passivity hurt in his head.

As he looked at these things and thought these things hearing the heat calls of the cicadas and soaking in the heavy green of the world, Utliff jumped into the river.

It was far from being his usual flashing crashing dive. When his head appeared above the surface, he was crying for help.

"Dyak, Dy! Help me, I'm a goner!"

Alarmed, Dyak was with him in three strokes, although still half expecting this might be a ruse that would earn him a ducking as soon as he reached his friend. But Utliff's body was limp and heavy. He closed his eyes and opened his mouth and groaned.

Grasping him firmly under the arm with one hand, Dyak slid beneath him until they were both on their backs, and kicked out for the nearest tree, a gnarled old broken pine that overhung the water so conveniently that they often used it to climb out on. Struggling only feebly, Utliff groaned again, and choked as water slopped into his mouth. With his free hand, Dyak reached up and seized a projecting limb of the tree.

He hauled himself far enough out of the water so that he could wrap his left leg around the tree trunk for leverage. It was still a terrible job to hook Utliff out of the water. As he leaned over, head almost in the river, panting and tugging, another pair of hands reached out to help him. Semary had run along the tree trunk and was beside him. With a grunt of thanks, he was able to let her support Utliff in the water while he released his friend and took a better purchase on him. Holding the tree trunk tightly between his knees, he hauled Utliff up beside him.

He and Semary rested the body along the trunk for a moment and then dragged it to the bank between them.

Utliff was dead.

Just for a moment, he shuddered violently. His eyes came open and his knees jerked up. Then he slumped back.

Almost at once, he began the horrible process of disintegration.

The limbs writhed as their muscles curled up. The flesh fell away. The flesh took on a greenish tinge. There came a frightening foetid smell as the insides revealed themselves; from them came a popping bubbling sound such as was never heard in the bowels of the living. In fear, Dyak and Semary rose and crept away, hand in hand. Utliff was not their kind any more. He had ceased to be Utliff.

They moved away from the river bank, hiding themselves among low trees and eventually sitting side by side on a large smooth boulder. Dyak was still dripping water, but the warmth of the rock helped to dry him and stop his shivering. Semary began to pluck

leaves from an overhanging tree and stick them on his damp chest. She smiled as she did so, so sweetly that he was forced to smile back though it hurt him.

He put his arm about her and rubbed his nose in her armpit. She chuckled, and they slid down until their backs were against the boulder. Dyak began to peel the damp leaves off his chest and stick them on to her body. In his head, he was conscious of an affection for Semary. More than an affection. He had felt this thing with women of his own group, and he had felt it for Semary before this. The disturbance was at once pleasant and immeasurably sad. He did not know how to drive it away.

Semary too seemed full of the same feeling. Suddenly she said to him, “People wear out.” It was as if she wanted to hide the subject in her head.

As always when they spoke, Dyak was aware of a great gulf that could not be bridged by words. Words were so much feebler than the things they were meant to represent. He answered, feeling the inadequacy of what he said, “All people are made to wear out.”

“How do you mean? How are people made?”

“They are made to wear out. They come down new from the hills. Being new does not last. . . Their faces get strange. Then they wear out, like Utliff.”

With an effort, the girl said, “Did you come from the hills long after Utliff?”

“Many, many days. And you, dear Semary?”

“Only a few days ago did I come from the hills. I came ... I came from by the smooth thing—that black barrier by the hill.”

He did not know what barrier she meant. Under his skin, he felt a sort of strangeness, fear and excitement and other things for which he had no name. Her eyes stared, as if both of them were near to something they had not dared to allow inside their heads.

“Tell me,” he said, “tell me what it was like, the coming into being.”

Her lashes fell over her eyes. “I was on the hillside,” she said. “By the smooth black barrier.”

To kill the long silence, he took her by the waist and settled into a horizontal position. So they lay, with their faces close together, sharing the same breath, as they had done before, and as Utliff had done with her in the days before he wore out.

He felt there was something else he should do. But in his head no prompting occurred, and his body seemed inhabited only by dreams without a name, dreams either hopelessly happy or hopelessly sad. Semary’s eyes were closed. But something told him that strange though she was, she felt the same turmoil as he.

Utliff had felt it too. When they had both lain against Semary before, Dyak had been so startled by the things in his head, he had talked about it to Utliff. He was afraid that he alone felt that strange uncertain sweetness; but Utliff admitted that he had been filled with the same things, head and body. When they tried lying close to the women of their own group, the feeling had persisted. Keen to experiment, they had lain close to each other, but then the feeling had not been there, and instead they had only laughed.

The long silence closed over them again. Semary's smell was sweet.

Dyak lay and looked up at the trees. He saw a cicada on a branch nearby, a gigantic beast that almost bent double the bough it rested on, its body at least as long as a man's arm. They made good food, but he was full of a hunger beyond hunger just now. The sound and feel of his world cradled him and ran through him.

Unexpectedly, she said, her voice warm in his ear, "Two people have become worn out today, in different ways. Utliff was one, Artet the other. Artet is a girl of my group. The cruncher got her. You know we are near the lair of the cruncher. He dragged Artet there, but her blood was already let."

"Did you forget to tell me before now?"

"I was coming to tell you when the foul thing overcame Utliff. Then your warmth near me made me forget."

Sulkily, Dyak said, "The cruncher got across the river where the waters run shallow. It used to eat the quackers, for I watched it often from our hill. Now that it has come across to this side, it is too stupid to go back. Soon it will starve to death. Then we shall all be safe."

"It will not starve until it has eaten all of us. We cannot be safe with it, Dyak. You must let its blood and wear it out."

He sat up, and then crouched beside her, angry. "Get *your* men to do the work. Why me? Our group is safe up on the hill in our deep caves. The cruncher is no bother to me. Why do you say this to me, Semary?"

She too sat up and stared at him. She brushed a remaining leaf from her breast. "I want you to do the thing because I want most to lie by you. I will always lie by you and not by our stinking men, if you shed the blood of the cruncher. If you will not do this for me, I swear I will go with the other stinking men and lie by them."

He grasped her wrist roughly. "You shall be with no men but me, Semary! You think I am afraid to let the blood of the cruncher? Of course I am not!"

Semary smiled at him, as if she enjoyed his roughness.

II

Dr. Ian Swanwick was growing increasingly bored, and growing increasingly less reluctant to show it. Several times, he lifted his face from his scanner and looked at the gray head of Graham Scarfe, with its ears and face enveloped in the next scanner. He coughed once or twice, with increasing emphasis, until Scarfe looked up.

"Oh, Dr. Swanwick. I forgot—you have a jet to catch back to Washington. Forgive me! Once I look into the scanner, I become so engrossed in their problems."

"I'm sure it must be engrossing if you can understand their language," Swanwick said.

"Oh, it's an easy language to understand. Simple. Few words, you know. Few tenses, few conjugations. Not that I'm any sort of a language specialist. We have several of them dropping in on us, including the great Professor Reardon, the etymologist. . . . I'm just—well, I'm just a model maker at heart. Not a professional man at all. I started as a child of eight, making a model of the old American Acheson, Topeka and Santa Fe steam railway, as it would have been in the early years of last century."

Chiefly because he was none too anxious to hear about that, Dr. Swanwick said, "Well, you have done a remarkable job on this tridiorama."

Nodding, Scarfe took the theologian's arm and led him away from the bank of scanners with their hand controls to the rail that fringed the platform on which they stood. They were high here, so high that the distant spires of New Brasilia could be seen framed between two mountain ranges. In the other direction stretched the South American continent, leaden with a heat that the air-conditioning did not entirely keep from their tower,

"If I have done a remarkable job," Scarfe said, gazing over the rail, "I copied it from a more remarkable one. From Nature itself."

Scarfe's gentle old voice, and his woolly gesture as he pointed out at the landscape before them, contrasted with the urban manner and clothes and the brisk voice of Dr. Swanwick. But Swanwick was silent for a moment as he stared over the country through which a river wound. That river flowed from distant mountains now shrouded in heat and curved below the hill on which they stood. Over on the opposite bank lay a region of swamp.

"You've made a good copy," he said. "The tridiorama is amazingly like the real thing."

"I thought you would approve, Dr. Swanwick. You especially,"

Scarfe said with an affectionate chuckle.

"Oh? Why's that?"

"Come now, the Maker's handiwork, you know ... As a theologian, I thought that angle would especially appeal to you. Mine's a poor copy compared with His, I know." He chuckled again, a little confused that he was not winning a responding chuckle from Swanwick.

"Theology does not necessarily imply a sentimental fondness for the Almighty. Laymen never understand that theology is simply a science that treats of the phenomena and facts of religion. As I say, I admire the skill of your modeling, and the way you have copied a real landscape; but that is not to say that I approve of it."

Nodding his head in an old man's fashion, Scarfe appeared to listen to the cicadas for a minute.

Then he said, "When I said I thought you would approve, perhaps you got me wrong. What I meant was that the tridiorama could present you people at the St. Benedict's Theological College with a chance to study a controlled experiment in your own line, as it has done to anthropologists and paleontologists and zoologists and prehistorians and I don't know who else. I mean . . ." He was a simple man, and confused by the superiority of this man who, as he began to perceive, did not greatly like him. In consequence he slipped into a more lax way of talk. "What I mean is, that the goings-on down in the tri-di are surely something to do with you people, aren't they?"

"Sorry, I don't get your meaning, Mr. Scarfe."

"Like we said in the letter to you, inviting you here. These stone-age people we've got—don't you want to see how they get along with religion? I admit that as yet they don't appear to have formed any—not even myths—but that in itself may be significant."

Turning his back on the hills, Swanwick said, "Since your little people are synthetic, their feelings are not of interest to St. Benedict's. We study the relationship between God and man, not between men and models. That, I'm afraid, will probably be our ultimate verdict, when I give my report to the board. We may even add a rider to the effect that the experiment is unethical."

Stung by this, Scarfe said, "We have plenty of other backers, you know, if you feel like that. People come here from all over the world. We've been able to synthesize life for twenty-odd years, but this is the first time the methods have been applied to this sort of environment. I'm surprised you take the attitude you do. In these enlightened days, you know. I suppose you understand how we create those Magdalenian men and women, and the iguanodons and little compsognathi and the allosaurs?"

As he began to answer, Swanwick started to pace toward the line of elevators, one of which had carried them up to the observation

platform. Scarfe was forced to follow.

"After the Russo-American gamete-separation experiments in the 2070's," Swanwick said remotely, "it was only a short while before individual chromosomes and then individual genes and then the import of the lineal order of the genes were tagged and understood. Successful synthetic life was created a couple of decades earlier. It was possible to use these crude 'synthlifes' to extract the desired genetic information. It then became possible to apply this information and form 'synthlifes' of any required combination of genes. You see, I have read the literature."

"That I never doubted," Scarfe said humbly. As they stepped into the elevator, he added, "But it was Elroy's discovery that geneanalyses of defunct species could be made from their bones—even fossil bones—that set the tridiorama project into action. It was the gene formula of an iguanodon he got first. Within a year, he was selling real live iguanodons to the world's zoos. Do you find that unethical, Dr. Swanwick? I suppose you do."

"No, I don't. It was only when Elroy brought back ancient men and women by the same method that the religious bodies became interested in the question."

They had now traveled down the outside of the chamber that housed the tridiorama. When the elevator gates opened, they stepped out, both aware and glad in their different ways that they were about to part for good.

They had started unhappily, with Swanwick teetotal, and none too good a lunch served in the canteen in his honor, and an antipathy between them that neither had quite the will to overcome.

Standing, anxious to make a final pleasantry, Scarfe said, "Well, if an offense was committed, at least we lessened it here by insisting on a smaller scale. It solves so many problems, you know!"

He chuckled again, the winning chuckle to which he knew few men failed to respond. He had learned his chuckle by heart. It was rich and fairly deep, intended to express appreciation of his own oddity as well as the wonder of the world. It never failed to disarm, but the theologian was not disarmed.

"You see what I mean—size is controlled by genes like every other physical factor," Scarfe said, his sallow cheeks coloring slightly. "So we cut our specimens down to size. It solves a lot of problems and keeps things simple."

"I wonder if the Magdalenian men see it quite like that?" Swanwick said. He put out a cold hand and thanked Scarfe for his hospitality. He turned and walked briskly out of the door toward the wingport where the St. Benedict trimjet lay awaiting him. With a puzzled expression on his face, Graham Scarfe stood watching him. A

cold, unlovable man, he thought.

Tropez, his Chief Assistant, came up, and scanned his chief sympathetically.

"Dr. Swanwick was a tough nut," he said.

Shaking his head, Scarfe came slowly out of his trance. "We must not speak ill of a man of God, Tropez," he said. "And I can see that we have yet to master some little details that may upset purists like Dr. Swanwick."

"You know we add something new every year, sir," Tropez said. "You can't do more than you are doing. I've got the attendance figures for the Open Gallery for last month and they're up twelve point three per cent on the previous month. Though I still think we were perhaps mistaken to put in normal-size cicadas. It does spoil the illusion for some people."

"We may have to think again about the cicadas," Scarfe said vaguely.

"I'm sure whatever you choose will be best," Tropez said. Saying things like that, he imagined, kept him his job.

Scarfe was not listening.

They had come to the door of the Open Gallery and pushed in. The Gallery was packed with paying customers to the tridiorama, staring from their darkness through the polaroid glass at the brightly lit scene within. Though they had a more restricted view than the specialists who, for higher prices, looked down through adjustable lenses from the observation platform above, there was a certain unique fascination at viewing that mocked-up world from ground level.

"We've got too few species in there for it to be a credible reproduction of a past earth," Scarfe complained. "Only five species—the Magdalenians, the three sorts of dinosaur, the iguanodons, the compsognathi, and the allosaurs—and the mice. I don't count those cicadas."

"Elroy Laboratories charge too much for their synthlifes," Tropez said. "We are building up as fast as we can. Besides, the Magdalenian people are the real attraction— that's what the crowds come to see. We've got ten of them now; they cost money."

"Eight," Scarfe said firmly. "Two went today. One got eaten by the allosaur, the other disintegrated. You should keep in touch, Tropez. You spend too much time in the box office."

Having thus squashed his assistant, he nodded, turned and went slowly back to the elevator.

It was the disintegration of the little figures that worried him; he could not resist a suspicion that Elroy Laboratories limited their life span deliberately to improve their turnover. Of course, the method

had to be perfected as yet. The synthlifes were created full-grown and unable to age; they simply wore out suddenly, and fell into their original salts. That would no doubt be improved with time. But the Elroy people were not very cooperative about the matter, and slow to answer the letters he flashed them.

The Elroy monopoly would have to be broken before real progress was made.

Still shaking his gray head, Scarfe rode the elevator back to the peace of the observation platform. He liked to watch the scientific men at work over the scanners, taking notes or recording. They treated him with respect. All the same, life was complex, full of all sorts of knotty, nasty little problems that could never be discussed . . . like how one should really handle a man like Swanwick, the prickly idiot.

Scarfe reflected, as he had so often done in the past, how much more simple it would be to be one of the synthetic Magdalenians imprisoned in the tridiorama. Why, they hadn't even got any sex problems! Not that he had, he hurried to reassure himself, at his age. But there had been a time . . .

Whereas the Magdalenians—

With the complex modern processes, it was possible to create life, but not life that could perpetuate itself. One day, maybe. But not yet. So down in the chamber the little Magdalenians could never know anything about reproduction, would never have to worry at all about sex.

"I suppose we've really created something like the garden of Eden here," Scarfe muttered to himself, peering into the nearest vacant scanner. In his crafty old mind, he began to devise a new and more alluring advertisement for his establishment, one that would not offend his scientific customers, but would rope in the sensation-loving public. "Lost Tribes in the Pocket-Size Garden of Eden . . . They're All Together in the Altogether . . ."

He adjusted the binocular vision, checking to see where the little girl was that he particularly fancied. Watching her through the lenses, picking up her tiny voice in the headphones, you would almost imagine . . .

III

The artificial sun was sinking over the tridiorama world.

Dyak and Semary had eaten. They had come across one of the giant cicadas lumbering along the ground, and Dyak had cut its head off. When they had eaten enough, they jumped in the river to remove the stickiness from their bodies. Now they were on the move again, more quietly, for they were near the lair of the big cruncher.

In the distance ahead of them, Dyak saw the barrier. That was the end of the world; tomorrow, the sun would rise from it. Now that the light was less intense, he could almost imagine that he saw giant human-like faces through the barrier.

He scoffed at the silly things that his head let happen inside it.

Their path was less easy now, and huge boulders towered above them, twice or three times their height. The fleet cruncher could easily pounce on them in such a situation. Dyak halted and took Semary's hand.

"Semary, you must wait here. I will go on. I will find the big cruncher and kill him with my knife. Then I will return to you."

"I am frightened, Dyak!"

"Don't be frightened. Hug yourself to keep happy. If the thing runs away in your direction, I will call, and you must crawl into the cleft between these two rocks where he cannot get you."

"I am frightened more for you than for me."

He laughed. "When I come back, I will take hold of you and . . . and I will hug you very closely." He did it to her then in parting, clutching her naked body against his and feeling the warm missing thing that was at once there and lacking. Then he turned lightly and ran in among the big boulders.

It took him only a few minutes to locate the dinosaur. Dyak knew the ways of the animals in his world. They were always restless at sunrise and in the evening.

He heard the creature moving in the bush. When he caught a glimpse of its greenish hide, he climbed, toe and finger, up one of the large boulders, and peered over the top at it.

The cruncher lay on an exposed slab of rock, moving its tail slowly back and forth. To Dyak, it seemed a vast beast, three times his length. Its head was large and cruel, built chiefly to accommodate its massive jaws. Its body, pressed now against the rock, was a beautiful functional shape. It had two pairs of legs, the great back legs on which it ran at speed, and the forelegs, which functioned as a pair of arms and ended in powerful talons. It was a formidable creature enough,

even when its jaws were closed and you could not see its teeth!

At present, the cruncher was not easy. It lay on one flank, its great legs hunched awkwardly, its yellow belly partly exposed to the rays of the sun. After a moment, it exposed its rump to the sun. Then it shuffled again and again lay supine. Its jaw opened and it began to pant, exposing its great fangs. Still uncomfortable, it finally moved into the shade and lay there absolutely still, only a pulse throbbing like an unswallowed boulder in its throat.

Dyak knew it would not lie still for long. The creature was basking.

Having spent most of the day getting its body heat down, it was now in the process of getting it up again, against the comparative coolness of the night. In the morning, it would bask to get its heat up again, coming slowly from torpor to full activity, and then setting out on the day's hunt. Like all cold-blooded creatures, the allosaur's metabolism was closely linked with external conditions; it was little more than a thermometer with legs and teeth. To Dyak, the matter appeared more simply: the thing got restless toward sunset.

After a brief sprawl in the shade, the cruncher moved back onto its rock, into the heat. As it went, Dyak slid off his rock. He had seen what he wanted. The cruncher often grew kittenish and accidentally felled trees and branches with its tail. There was a good sturdy length of branch lying in the other side of the clearing. Using all cover, Dyak worked his way round toward it. He trimmed it with his knife. It was crude, but it was what he needed.

He tucked it into the plaited belt he wore about his middle.

Encumbered by his armory, he now climbed a tree and crept along a branch that left him suspended almost directly over the cruncher. The only drawback with this position was that the sun was almost in his eyes.

He had not reckoned for this factor. The sun was lower than he had thought, and he must hurry. Pulling out his knife, he looked down at the cruncher—to find it looking up at him.

The big animal had finally maneuvered itself into a position of comfort, and was huddled on the rock on its belly and its head resting on its forelegs. A sound in the tree had caught its attention, and it swiveled its gaze upwards, scanning the foliage with two baleful yellow eyes.

Though it was fast on the run, Dyak knew that its reflexes in other respects were slow. Before it could move, he jumped down at it.

He landed on the rock, on the balls of his feet, just by its neck. As it moved to get up, its head came forward and it opened its savage mouth. Dyak thrust forward with the broken branch, punching forward with all his weight, holding the branch out like a shield. He

jammed it between the open jaws, hard.

Instantly he ducked. The talons were coming up for him. And with the same movement, the cruncher was rising to its feet. Dyak slithered a couple of paces and jumped. He grabbed the creature's neck and swung himself onto it. It began at once to rear and plunge, growling savagely deep in its throat, so that he could feel the vibration under his clenched hands. The world spun about him, but he clung tight hoping only that the wicked tail would not sweep him from his perch.

For all the terror of those moments, when he knew that if he fell he was lost, Dyak had chance enough to see that his branch had done what it was intended to do. The cruncher's jaws were wedged open; the branch was jammed behind its teeth, and half its efforts were devoted to removing the wedge. Its forelegs were clawing its face dreadfully, drawing blood.

Keeping his hands linked, Dyak wormed his way to a better position up the neck of his bucking mount. Roaring now with its fury, the cruncher reared up, lost its balance on the slippery rock and slipped sideways, falling on its haunches among bush.

Dyak was almost flung clear, but he used the moment to grasp the creature's throat tightly with one arm and draw his knife. He struck just as it leaped up and plunged anew into the undergrowth. The blade burst down through one of those glaring yellow eyes.

He was at once thrown free, as all the muscles of the creature's body were galvanized with pain. He lay half-stunned in the middle of a bush, all the wind knocked out of him. The cruncher screamed with agony and anger, and began thumping the wounded side of its head against a rock.

Feeling that if he did not move at this movement, he would never be able to move again in his life, Dyak tore himself from the bush, dodged in past that murderous flailing tail and once more hurled himself at the monster's skull. He mistrusted his ability to pierce the armored flesh of the cruncher, but the eyes were a safe target.

With something like a dive, he hurled himself at the cruncher's good eye. Using all the strength in his right arm, he brought down the weapon, down, down, deep into the squelching eye, pushing in deep through pulp and blood with all the fury of his life behind the blow. Then the great tail came around and knocked him flying.

When he regained consciousness, it was to find himself stuck head foremost in a rhododendron bush. It was a while before he could bring himself to move and drag himself out. He was scratched from head to foot, and soreness filled his left shoulder where the creature's armored tail had struck him. It was growing dark, and he was alive.

The cruncher lay in the center of a wide area of broken vegetation

and churned-up soil. Its tail still slapped the ground, but it was to all intents and purposes finished. He had pierced it to the brain.

Slowly, he climbed to the top of a nearby boulder. The sky was stained red with sunset, just as it was every night, and the red was reflected in the river, so that the water looked like blood. He put his right hand to his mouth and began to call Semary.

At first his call was quiet and directed to her. Then life began to return fully to his veins, and he looked down at the mighty creature that he—he, alone!—had destroyed. Triumph filled him. Ignoring the ache, he raised his left hand too to his open mouth, and began a series of whooping calls that spread out across the valley. Louder and louder they grew, and more piercing. His lungs were inspired.

Nor did he stop when Semary ran into the clearing and stood to marvel at the defeated beast.

The world should know his prowess! It was a mighty tabletop victory.

The time to decide who is going to manufacture and market synthetic life is now. . . . The curse of most great scientific discoveries is man's failure to plan ahead for their sensible application. There is no excuse for repeating that mistake in the matter of synthetic life. We have ample notice that science is trying to produce it, reasonable expectations that it will succeed, and plenty of precedents to suggest the problems that this success will create.

This sounds like the sort of thing that makes them keep saying science is catching up with science fiction. Actually, it is Russell Baker, keeping his usual jump ahead of both science and fiction from the vantage point of The Observer.

What level of intelligence must the manufacturer maintain in a synthetic man? The Federal Communications Commission permits television to conform to the twelve-year-old mind, which the industry presumes to be the national norm. Should the government require the synthetic-man industry to maintain a twelve-year-old intelligence level in its product?

Among the probable problems he surveys (color, sex, obsolescence, governmental controls, etc.) he does not seem to anticipate any trouble with the churches, and perhaps—between the ecumenical trend in religion and the metaphysical direction of scientific philosophy – there need be none. Possibly the churches (especially the more puritanical sects?) will accept a new process for an old product —man-made man—as eagerly as they welcomed the archaeological work that uncovered the Dead Sea Scrolls?

In any case, I feel there is a sincere effort being made on both sides: as witness Dr. Tschirgi's report, from the pages of a scientific

journal whose fearless reopening of the evolution controversy a few years ago (discussed in the 9th Annual) should certainly establish it as a suitable medium for the consideration of religio-scientific matters.

Dr. Tschirgi appends the following note to his paper: Several years ago, on the flattering but faulty assumption that I possessed some sort of expertise in fluid and electrolyte physiology, I was invited to be a guest discussant by the UCLA Medical Society for a series of scholarly case histories on the “salt-saving syndrome.” This was a gracious attempt by the clinicians to recognize the unlikely chance that a physiologist might make a small but effective contribution to clinical pathology. At least it was felt that, what with Supreme Court concern over discriminatory practices and civil rights, such a comradely invitation might help to avert a menacing demonstration and boycott by the basic scientists. Having foolishly agreed to this exposure, I soon realized that I must either withdraw ignominiously or prepare some pseudo-erudite presentation with which to uphold the honor of Physiology.

* * * *

TITLE: A SINGULAR CASE OF EXTREME ELECTROLYTE BALANCE ASSOCIATED WITH FOLIE A DEUX

[Reproduced from *Worm Runner's Digest,* 1965, VII, 2 (78-79).]

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* * * *

The Case of L. W.

Chief Complaint (obtained from husband): Sudden collapse during cross-country hike.

Present Illness: This approximately forty-year-old, well-developed, well-nourished Caucasian female, a refugee housewife of Mediterranean extraction, was D.O.A., accompanied by her husband and two daughters aged twenty and twenty-one. The patient's history was obtained from her husband, who was somewhat incoherent and appeared to be a latent schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur.

The family had been moderately successful sheepherders along the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, and no previous history of electrolyte balance could be elicited. However, descriptions of strange nocturnal behavior by the uncle-in-law of the deceased might represent a tendency toward mental instability in the husband's family. During a sheep drive several weeks before the patient's death, her husband and his uncle quarreled over the disposition of some of the sheep, and they separated with the husband apparently harboring paranoid delusions.

The acute onset of the patient's terminal disease was inextricably woven into a bizarre hallucinatory episode of her husband, during which he described voices and visions warning him of impending disaster. His behavior during this episode was sufficiently irrational to arouse the neighbors, who attempted to calm the disturbed man by humoring him and offering to dispose of the visions by forcibly ejecting them from his house. Rather than allaying his fears, this served only to aggravate his paranoia, and he forced his wife and two daughters to leave their home and accompany him in a rigorous cross-country flight, during which the patient developed the acute and fatal

episode of her disease.

The patient had delivered two normal pregnancies at home, with no history of edema or toxicity. She had at no time complained of excessive thirst, and was apparently free of symptoms until the fatal, fulminating attack. Very little family history was obtainable, but no similar condition was known on either her paternal or maternal side.

Psychologically, the patient appears to have been completely dominated by her husband and his uncle, and to have become so submerged in her husband's mental aberrations that she began to share his hallucinations and delusions. This transference to her husband of an unresolved Electra complex may well have been the psychosomatic basis for the altered adrenocortical physiology which seems to have been responsible for her terminal disease. We cannot, of course, eliminate the possibility of a libidinous attraction towards her uncle-in-law, who, no doubt, represented the more masculine father figure. This multifaceted ambivalence and superego-id conflict resulted in schizoid withdrawal and an attachment to mysticism centered around her husband's psychotic manifestations. Indeed, the subsequent history of her two daughters who were seen in their third trimester, having become pregnant incestuously, indicates the pervasive and malignant nature of this psychiatric problem.

At autopsy, the primary findings were those characteristic of right heart success, recently described by Assali as "tissue drought," and attributed by him to vagus imbalance causing the heart to beat counter-clockwise. The tissues were dehydrated and friable, and the sodium and chloride content of the body fluids was extremely elevated. The adrenal glands were hypertrophied bilaterally, and histologic examination revealed marked hyperplasia of cortical cells.

Final Diagnosis: This is believed to be a unique case of acute, fulminating salt-saving syndrome resulting from a primary hypertrophy of the adrenal cortices. There can be little doubt that chronic psychosomatic forces interacted with a genetic predisposition to generate the constellation of pathologic factors involved in this remarkable case. The suddenness of onset of the final illness, the rapidly downward and fatal course, and the absence of previous symptoms lead one to suspect that the emotional shock to the patient of seeing her home destroyed minutes after her escape with her family produced an overwhelming hyper-adrenalcorticism.

* * * *

Then the Lord caused to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew

those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.—Genesis XIX, 24-26.

* * * *

I am pleased to report, Dr. Tschirgi's note concludes, that I was laughed off the podium.

I don't know about science, but scientists are catching up with s-f —again. Last time around, we had physicists and engineers; this time, it looks to be the people from the "life sciences"—biology, medicine, biochemistry, psychology, zoology—who are turning to the medium. (Something new has distinctly been added when the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* runs a science-fiction serial, clearly so marked. "The Adventures and Times of Eosilred, Prince of Elfour: A Bloodtime Story," by Ian Rose, is a pulse-quickening saga of vascular warfare through the main arterials of a universe known as "He." And the odd thing is, it's *good.)*

Meantime, poetry is catching up with science fiction (and/or vice-versa). In Britain, poetry-and-s-f has virtually a Movement of its own. Here in the states, the situation—as with fiction—is less focused, but the same trend is evident. It started in the "little magazines," two or three years ago. Now you find Dick Allen in *Antioch Review,* Sonya Dorman in the *Saturday Review,* Gerald Jonas in *F&SF,* R. P. Lister in the *Atlantic,* Tuli Kupferberg in *East Side Review*—and how many others, I cannot begin to guess; I mention only those I have happened to notice—plus, of course, the original poetry-and-s-f man, John Ciardi. (Fifteen years ago, when Ciardi and I were both visiting members of the late Fletcher Pratt's Chas. Addams household on the New Jersey shore, Ciardi was editing a series of science-fantasy books for Twayne, and it was from him that I had my first fiction *assignment:* a chance to write a story without regard to the magazine-market restrictions or demands.)

* * * *

A MAGUS
JOHN CIARDI

A missionary from the Mau Mau told me.
There are spores blowing from space.
He has himself seen an amazing botany
springing the jungle. Fruit with a bearded face
that howls at the picker. Mushrooms that bleed.
A tree of enormous roots that sends no trace
above ground; not a leaf. And he showed me the seed
of strange lettuces that induce
languages. The Jungle has come loose,
is changing purposes.
Nor are these vegetations
of the new continuum the only sign.
New eyes have observed the constellations.
And what does not change when looked at?—coastline?
sea? sky? The propaganda of the wind reaches.
Set watches on your gardens. What spring teaches
seed shall make new verbs. A root is a tongue.
I repeat it as he spoke it. I do not interpret
what I do not understand. He comes among
many who have come to us. He speaks and we forget
and are slow to be reminded. But he does come,
signs do appear.
There are poisoned islands far over:
fish from their reefs come to table, and some
glow in the dark not of candlelight. A windhover
chatters in the counters of our polar camps.
A lectern burns. Geese jam the radar. The red phone
rings. Is there an answer? Planes from black ramps
howl to the edge of sound. The unknown
air breaks from them. They crash through.
What time is it in orbit? Israeli teams
report they have found the body, but Easter seems
symbolically secure. What more is true?
How many megatons of idea is a man? What island
lies beyond his saying? I have heard, and say
what I heard said, and believe. I do not understand.
But I have seen him change water to blood, and call away

the Lion from its Empire. He speaks that tongue.
I have seen white bird and black bird follow him, hung
like one cloud over his head. His hand,
when he wills it, bursts into flame. The white bird
and the black divide and circle it. At his word
they enter the fire and glow like metal. A ray
reaches from him to the top of the air,
and in it the figures of a vision play
these things I believe whose meaning I cannot say.
Then he closes his fist and there is nothing there.

* * * *

Ciardi's column in the *Saturday Review* (where he also presides as poetry editor) is called "Manner of Speaking," and in its flexible space he speaks in, and of, all sorts of manners. You never know as you find the page whether it will be prose or poetry, angry or tender, playful or professional: only that you will be marvelously well entertained, or deeply moved, or both, and probably learn something as well.

Last year, there was the "Alphabestiary," running through July, definitions in verse of such diverse creatures as Kangaroo, Uncle, I, Werewolf, Gnu, and Victor.

Or the furious and funny answer to Kathy K. (and Kathy's mother), when Kathy wrote: *John Ciardi your writing is very bad in the book* I Met a Man *because you do not put periods ...*

The reply began:

Look, Kathy, look.
See the poet.
The poet is fat.
The poet is fifty.
The poet is dull.
He is sitting at his desk writing a poem ...

Or the one on getting rid of the TV set, which concludes: . . . *these days in my house there are sometimes periods of silence. And who knows what heavenly dialogues a man may yet imagine given enough silences to start from?*

Or The Refugee Angel (a, perhaps, allegory): Homesick for ourselves, we refugee angels inserted personals in the leading newspapers and became pen pals. It wasn't, of course, *the same thing as going home, wherever that had been, whatever was left of it.*

But just to have someone to talk to in our own language (which we are forever inventing) is almost the next thing to a reality . . .

... A letter is an evidence. It can be folded and carried in a pocket and reopened at night and read again. And, during the day, touched. It is the next thing to being almost real. It is a thing and, therefore, partly believable. . . .

Ciardi was talking about soldiers, far from home. But what he says is at least as true for the sudden letter from a stranger that discovers a part of one's own private landscape in another's mind.

I spoke earlier of the letters that are the Anthologist's Reward. Sometimes, they build up to a virtual chain reaction.

It was Carol Emshwiller (herself represented in the *4th* and *5th Annuals)* who called Peter Redgrave's prose-poem, "Mr. Waterman," to my attention, two years ago. Her post card referred me to the *Paris Review,* and almost timidly assured me that she knew it was not quite what I usually used, but *she* thought it was awfully good.

She was right on both counts. It was very good, and it was not what I usually used: Not what I usually *found.* I find more of it these days: there *is* more, and I'm beginning to know where to look. And writers write to tell me about the good new things I often have not seen myself. Like Carol Emshwiller, like Ballard, like Disch. Or like Redgrove. Some excerpts from a much folded, carried, opened, and reread letter:

* * * *

My complaint about much s-f has been that the writers seem to have kept to a pulp magazine lingua franca in the interests, perhaps, of getting their insights published and known, and have neglected what you could call the known means of expression.

He goes on to discuss several writers, and one in particular: . . . *some of whose stories have invented ,parts of my own mind, but whose mode of expression I believe is often conventional in the extreme. I admire his invention so much . . . but when I think back to his stories and* listen *to them I can usually say, "That's like so-and-so, or he's using such and such as* a *vehicle, to get that wonderful thing across, instead of coming, in his own person."*

And by way of pointing up his meaning, comes at last to: . . . *Jorge Luis Borges, who tells the most appalling mathematical jokes with sad humility ... In my opinion he's the greatest link between s-f and so-called* humane *studies, in, for instance, his magnificent "library of Babel" about the people who wander in an infinite library of books containing, not sense*

necessarily, but all the possible permutations of letters (like the monkeys who, given long enough, *would randomly strike out Shakespeare* on *typewriters)*.

* * * *

He went on to quote, stopping sometimes to repeat and relish some treasured phrase—a paragraph from the "Library," another from "Funes the Memorious" (who could remember *everything)*.

Others had told me about Borges. He was "on my list." It's a long list, and its priorities are always in upheaval. After Redgrove's letter, I went out and found the book. From which—

* * * *

THE CIRCULAR RUINS
JORGE LUIS BORGES

> And if he left off dreaming about you...
> —*Through the Looking Glass,* VI

No one saw him disembark in the unanimous night, no one saw the bamboo canoe sinking into the sacred mud, but within a few days no one was unaware that the silent man came from the South and that his home was one of the infinite villages upstream, on the violent mountainside, where the Zend tongue is not contaminated with Greek and where leprosy is infrequent. The truth is that the obscure man kissed the mud, came up the bank without pushing aside (probably without feeling) the brambles which dilacerated his flesh, and dragged himself, nauseous and bloodstained, to the circular enclosure crowned by a stone tiger or horse, which once was the color of fire and now was that of ashes. This circle was a temple, long ago devoured by fire, which the malarial jungle had profaned and whose god no longer received the homage of men. The stranger stretched out beneath the pedestal. He was awakened by the sun high above. He evidenced without astonishment that his wounds had closed; he shut his pale eyes and slept, not out of bodily weakness but out of determination of will. He knew that this temple was the place required by his invincible purpose; he knew that, downstream, the incessant trees had not managed to choke the ruins of another propitious temple, whose gods were also burned and dead; he knew that his immediate obligation was to sleep. Towards midnight he was awakened by the disconsolate cry of a bird. Prints of bare feet, some figs and a jug told him that men of the region had respectfully spied upon his sleep and were solicitous of his favor or feared his magic. He felt the chill of fear and sought out a burial niche in the dilapidated wall and covered himself with some unknown leaves.

The purpose which guided him was not impossible, though it was supernatural. He wanted to dream a man: he wanted to dream him with minute integrity and insert him into reality. This magical project had exhausted the entire content of his soul; if someone had asked him his own name or any trait of his previous life, he would not have been able to answer. The uninhabited and broken temple suited him, for it was a minimum of visible world; the nearness of the peasants also suited him, for they would see that his frugal necessities were

supplied. The rice and fruit of their tribute were sufficient sustenance for his body, consecrated to the sole task of sleeping and dreaming.

At first, his dreams were chaotic; somewhat later, they were of a dialectical nature. The stranger dreamt that he was in the center of a circular amphitheater which in some way was the burned temple: clouds of silent students filled the gradins; the faces of the last ones hung many centuries away and at a cosmic height, but were entirely clear and precise. The man was lecturing to them on anatomy, cosmography, magic; the countenances listened with eagerness and strove to respond with understanding, as if they divined the importance of the examination which would redeem one of them from his state of vain appearance and interpolate him into the world of reality. The man, both in dreams and awake, considered his phantoms' replies, was not deceived by impostors, divined a growing intelligence in certain perplexities. He sought a soul which would merit participation in the universe.

After nine or ten nights, he comprehended with some bitterness that he could expect nothing of those students who passively accepted his doctrines, but that he could of those who, at times, would venture a reasonable contradiction. The former, though worthy of love and affection, could not rise to the state of individuals; the latter pre-existed somewhat more. One afternoon (now his afternoons too were tributaries of sleep, now he remained awake only for a couple of hours at dawn) he dismissed the vast illusory college forever and kept one single student. He was a silent boy, sallow, sometimes obstinate, with sharp features which reproduced those of the dreamer. He was not long disconcerted by his companions' sudden elimination; his progress, after a few special lessons, astounded his teacher. Nevertheless, catastrophe ensued. The man emerged from sleep one day as if from a viscous desert, looked at the vain light of afternoon, which at first he confused with that of dawn, and understood that he had not really dreamt. All that night and all day, the intolerable lucidity of insomnia weighed upon him. He tried to explore the jungle, to exhaust himself; amidst, the hemlocks, he was scarcely able to manage a few snatches of feeble sleep, fleetingly mottled with some rudimentary visions which were useless. He tried to convoke the college and had scarcely uttered a few brief words of exhortation, when it became deformed and was extinguished. In his almost perpetual sleeplessness, his old eyes burned with tears of anger.

He comprehended that the effort to mold the incoherent and vertiginous matter dreams are made of was the most arduous task a man could undertake, though he might penetrate all the enigmas of the upper and lower orders: much more arduous than weaving a rope of sand or coining the faceless wind. He comprehended that an initial

failure was inevitable. He swore he would forget the enormous hallucination which had misled him at first, and he sought another method. Before putting it into effect, he dedicated a month to replenishing the powers his delirium had wasted. He abandoned any premeditation of dreaming and, almost at once, was able to sleep for a considerable part of the day. The few times he dreamt during this period, he did not take notice of the dreams. To take up his task again, he waited until the moon's disk was perfect. Then, in the afternoon, he purified himself in the waters of the river, worshiped the planetary gods, uttered the lawful syllables of a powerful name and slept. Almost immediately, he dreamt of a beating heart.

He dreamt it as active, warm, secret, the size of a closed fist, of garnet color in the penumbra of a human body as yet without face or sex; with minute love he dreamt it, for fourteen lucid nights. Each night he perceived it with greater clarity. He did not touch it, but limited himself to witnessing it, observing it, perhaps correcting it with his eyes. He perceived it, lived it, from many distances and many angles. On the fourteenth night he touched the pulmonary artery with his finger, and then the whole heart, inside and out. The examination satisfied him. Deliberately, he did not dream for a night; then he took the heart again, invoked the name of a planet and set about to envision another of the principal organs. Within a year he reached the skeleton, the eyelids. The innumerable hair was perhaps the most difficult task. He dreamt a complete man, a youth, but this youth could not rise nor did he speak nor could he open his eyes. Night after night, the man dreamt him as asleep.

In the Gnostic cosmogonies, the demiurgi knead and mold a red Adam who cannot stand alone; as unskillful and crude and elementary as this Adam of dust was the Adam of dreams fabricated by the magician's nights of effort. One afternoon, the man almost destroyed his work but then repented. (It would have been better for him had he destroyed it.) Once he had completed his supplications to the numina of the earth and the river, he threw himself down at the feet of the effigy which was perhaps a tiger and perhaps a horse, and implored its unknown succor. That twilight, he dreamt of the statue. He dreamt of it as a living, tremulous thing: it was not an atrocious mongrel of tiger and horse, but both these vehement creatures at once and also a bull, a rose, a tempest. This multiple god revealed to him that its earthly name was Fire, that in the circular temple (and in others of its kind) people had rendered it sacrifices and cult and that it would magically give life to the sleeping phantom, in such a way that all creatures except Fire itself and the dreamer would believe him to be a man of flesh and blood. The man was ordered by the divinity to instruct his creature in its rites, and send him to the other broken temple whose

pyramids survived downstream, so that in this deserted edifice a voice might give glory to the god. In the dreamer's dream, the dreamed one awoke.

The magician carried out these orders. He devoted a period of time (which finally comprised two years) to revealing the arcana of the universe and of the fire cult to his dream child. Inwardly, it pained him to be separated from the boy. Under the pretext of pedagogical necessity, each day he prolonged the hours he dedicated to his dreams. He also redid the right shoulder, which was perhaps deficient. At times, he was troubled by the impression that all this had happened before. ... In general, his days were happy; when he closed his eyes, he would think: *Now I shall be with my son.* Or, less often: *The child I have engendered awaits me and will not exist if I do not go to him.*

Gradually, he accustomed the boy to reality. Once he ordered him to place a banner on a distant peak. The following day, the banner flickered from the mountain top. He tried other analogous experiments, each more daring than the last. He understood with certain bitterness that his son was ready—and perhaps impatient—to be born. That night he kissed him for the first time and sent him to the other temple whose debris showed white downstream, through many leagues of inextricable jungle and swamp. But first (so that he would never know he was a phantom, so that he would be thought a man like others) he instilled into him a complete oblivion of his years of apprenticeship.

The man's victory and peace were dimmed by weariness. At dawn and at twilight, he would prostrate himself before the stone figure, imagining perhaps that his unreal child was practicing the same rites, in other circular ruins, downstream; at night, he would not dream, or would dream only as all men do. He perceived the sounds and forms of the universe with a certain colorlessness: his absent son was being nurtured with these diminutions of his soul. His life's purpose was complete; the man persisted in a kind of ecstasy. After a time, which some narrators of his story prefer to compute in years and others in lustra, he was awakened one midnight by two boatmen; he could not see their faces, but they told him of a magic man in a temple of the North who could walk upon fire and not be burned. The magician suddenly remembered the words of the god. He recalled that, of all the creatures of the world, fire was the only one that knew his son was a phantom. This recollection, at first soothing, finally tormented him. He feared his son might meditate on his abnormal privilege and discover in some way that his condition was that of a mere image. Not to be a man, to be the projection of another man's dream, what a feeling of humiliation, of vertigo! All fathers are interested in the children they have procreated (they have permitted to exist) in mere

confusion or pleasure; it was natural that the magician should fear for the future of that son, created in thought, limb by limb and feature by feature, in a thousand and one secret nights.

The end of his meditations was sudden, though it was foretold in certain signs. First (after a long drought) a faraway cloud on a hill, light and rapid as a bird; then, toward the south, the sky which had the rose color of the leopard's mouth; then the smoke which corroded the metallic nights; finally, the panicky flight of the animals. For what was happening had happened many centuries ago. The ruins of the fire god's sanctuary were destroyed by fire. In a birdless dawn the magician saw the concentric blaze close round the walls. For a moment, he thought of taking refuge in the river, but then he knew that death was coming to crown his old age and absolve him of his labors. He walked into the shreds of flame. But they did not bite into his flesh, they caressed him and engulfed him without heat or combustion. With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he too was a mere appearance, dreamt by another.

* * * *

Although the volume containing "The Circular Ruins," and most of what has since appeared as *Fictions,* was published in Spanish twenty-five years ago, none of Borges' books appeared in English until 1962. (Some of Borges' poetry was translated for anthologies as early as 1942—but the first story to be published in English was translated by Anthony Boucher for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* in 1948; eight individual stories altogether appeared between 1948-1959.)

At the present time, three collections of Borges' work are available in the United States: *Labyrinths* and two volumes from the University of Texas Press: *Dreamtigers* (1964) and *Other Inquisitions* (1965).

It seems time to ask again: what are the gradations, the lines of definition, between "delusion" and "reality"? Between madness and dreaming, between dream and creativity, between the act of creation and divinity? Between divinity and madness?

In which of these overlapping lands lies the residence of Reality?

The latest scientific stance suggests that the act of dreaming is a prerequisite for sanity. But sanity (in court at least) is the ability to distinguish reality from illusion. Are our dreams, then, *real?* (Sub-real? Surreal?)

Harvey Jacobs, who is just about half as old as Jorge Luis Borges, but who broke into (English-language, fiction-category) print only two

years later than Borges—and who is also appearing for the first time in any sort of s-f collection—has a not even remotely similar story, which also happens to be about dreams, gods, and the act of creation.

* * * *

THE GIRL WHO DREW THE GODS
HARVEY JACOBS

I

My name is Oliver August.

I am friendly, a Moose. I try to believe in disarmament. I cook for a hobby. Every seven years my cells change. But each new cell sings of health and well-being. No matter how often I am replaced, I remain formidable.

Compare me with the rest.

In my city, in my time, half the people I meet live in their own suburbs, far from the energy of heart and the steam of bowel. The other half, with pinched lips, breathe their own smoke.

Am I apart, the only one with balance? If so, why so?

Look into my eyes: rain puddles rich with life. My story should be told.

* * * *

II

When Oliver August, formerly passive, girded his valuable loins they charged like a unicorn, there was cause.

The cause was war.

War is a time for attack. But I did not rattle my sabre at the common enemy. I had a private skirmish.

The war I speak of was a small war. Not World War II, which moved millions, and which I missed by a whisker of time—the Korean War, a bubble of violence off to the left of the world's population centers.

I was out of college less than a year when the Koreans stopped sharing rice. My full time job was soul searching. I was taking the internal grand tour. I resented interruption.

Suddenly the leisure of self-discovery drained away. Because of someone else's history, the focus of my life was blurred.

My parents talked sense to me. They suggested that I go back to

school. They regarded this move as wise and patriotic. The whole idea has firm roots in tradition.

It is considered a richer experience to give blood if a boy has his master's degree.

After hesitation I agreed. My reasons were personal. I had just finished four hundred dollars worth of dental work. My mouth was a wet Fort Knox. In dreams I saw Communists mining my head for gold.

So, not eager to break goalposts, I entered a Convenient University. I readied for conflict in the department of philosophy.

The Department of Philosophy was a great, protecting bird. Under her thick wings small groups huddled together.

English literature was my major. Myself and others like me were assigned a place near the bird's big chest. We took comfort in the regular blood thumps. The hot juices of scholarship kept each feather warm.

At first it was not so bad. After half a year of job hunting and the look of deep fear in my parents' eyes, campus life was pleasant. College was as good a place as any to wait for my war.

I was deeply involved in a thesis on Chaucer's symbolic animals for exactly one month. The news from Asia got worse. I worried with Douglas MacArthur. Chanticleer, the old cock, laid eggs of anxiety.

The thing is, I was overly concerned with my own symbols. Every night, my book by my bed, I dreamed about inlays, crowns, and unnatural bridges. With the equipment I used for chewing, a family in Peking could live like Mandarins.

Oliver August grew restless, logy, irregular, ill at ease. My courses lost magnetism. Most of the day I spent sitting in the library smoking room, which is a huge rancid lung. When you open the door to that chamber of gas, blue ooze filters out. I am sure that smoke from students long dead is still imprisoned there.

I sat, hour after hour, pooling my gray breath with the rest. I tried to read classics, but the words were wooden. For the first time in my life I grew jumpy. My belly housed an imp who churned and cursed fate. My palms gave salty sweat. There was weakness in my knees and tightness around my frontal lobes.

To pull myself together, I shopped for new involvements. Desperately, I looked for some subject to lure my response. The eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, Shakespeare's minor plays, James Joyce, John Donne, the seventeenth century, art in the modern world, the middle ages—name it, I was there. I listened. I heard. I heard. I heard soldiers marching. I heard the lap of the Yalu River. I heard Oriental dentists sharpening their burrs.

Finally, thank god, *something* caught my attention. The course that won me the minute I read its abridged description was know the

navaho II.

Why?

I have since learned that many eminent persons, to keep their sanity, involve with a universe far from their daily experience. They become experts on the Civil War, on Henry Adams, on the Latvian Uprising of 1236. It is not too different from collecting stamps or coins. I needed something to keep my brain intact. I needed Navahos, and I needed them badly.

There was a problem. I should explain here that the University was divided genitally into a Brother and Sister school. Usually students were not permitted to cross this simple sexual barrier. But exceptions were made in cases of hardship.

know the navaho II was given Tuesdays and Thursdays at ten. I read about it on Wednesday. By Thursday at nine, I was waiting at the proper room, signed dispensations in hand.

At nine-thirty the instructor came. Her name was Miss Sydney Luptik. According to her biography in the catalogue, Miss Luptik had lived for years among assorted Indians. She was the author of two books, *Arrows in the Sun* and *The Laughing Waters,* and she served as an advisor to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Miss Luptik walked along the narrow corridor, a thin, dynamic soul who accomplished motion in a barrage of baby steps. It was easy to see her talking right up to a Geronimo or the Great White Father himself.

We met head-on outside her classroom. I told her how much I wanted to audit her. She refused me. She refused me the way she would have refused the Union Pacific permission to build its track over her grazing land. She refused me for the logical reason that I had not had proper preparation.

“Without know the navaho i,” Miss Luptik said, “how could you expect to jump into know the navaho ii? My course builds. You wouldn’t understand subtleties. It would not be fair to you, Mr. August. Come back in September.”

I swore I would bone up. I promised to devote myself. She could not be moved.

“Look,” I said, “by September I’ll probably be in the U. S. Army, and remembering back to the way I played stickball and ring-a-levio, I’ll most likely be dead on an alien shore. Give me my chance.”

Miss Luptik considered my unusual circumstances.

“Welcome to the tribe,” she said.

The course itself was beautiful. It was everything I hoped for. Even the classroom was exactly right.

We met in the basement of a building whose first female students were rebels against the tarantella. The walls were tooth-yellow,

stained with brown. The blackboard was cracked down the center. The wooden chairs, which had had flat seats, were actually worn down into small valleys through the attrition of thousands of ripe, impatient rumps.

Each chair had one fat arm for book resting. The arms were covered with initials, dates and names. The place was full of nostalgia. Only a bank of fluorescent lights intruded, and a sprinkler system.

As might be expected, Miss Luptik had triumphed over her environment. She made it her own. Everywhere there were pictures of Indians at work and at play. A table near the window held a jar of seeds, samples of wampum, a necklace of clay, arrowheads, a drum, a pipe, a feathered hat, and a tiny model of a village complete with inch-high figurines.

Our group was small. Beside myself, there were six girls. Miss Luptik had given them names. I became Blue Bear, according to the custom.

Miss Luptik taught her section in semidramatic form. We acted out brief dramas of Indian life. In our impromptu playlets, a kind of group therapy with moccasins, Miss Luptik's names added scope and dimension.

I, for example, might be asked to describe a day hunting buffalo. As Oliver August, I would have been paralyzed. As Blue Bear, out of Shaking Cow by Great Grizzly, I felt right at home.

Pale Moon, a chubby girl to my left, might tell of her betrothal. Green Tree, a Bostonian, would hash out her weaving problems. Waterfall, Bending Willow, Sipping Deer and Wild Bud might sing a fertility song while beating their feet.

So the days went. On Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday I read the papers, listened to the radio, watched television, and did push-ups while waiting my call. Tuesdays and Thursdays I put on gaily colored clothes and concentrated on the antelope situation.

As the only eligible brave in know the navaho II, I became aware of the maidens who shared my hogan. The girls divided into note takers and knitters. I watched them note and knit with paternal tranquillity. In our dramas it was I who brought them fresh meat and supplied protection against everything but the flow of history. Even Miss Luptik spoke to me with special respect. I knew my responsibility and its rewards.

Which brings me to Marilyn Mayberry.

Of the knitters, Sipping Deer (Marilyn Mayberry) was the most chronic. She made mufflers—long roadlike mufflers with fringes at their beginnings and ends. She knitted like a sparrow pecks, in frantic flurries. While she knitted her foot tapped. Miss Mayberry was blessed with huge energy.

I noticed her the way I noticed the rest. No more. No less. She was pretty enough, a medium-sized girl, nicely built, short black hair, pleasant lips, nothing special except for fine breasts. She dressed well, much like the others, in thick sweaters and plaid skirts, long black stockings and Capezio sandals.

To comprehend the passion which developed between us it is necessary to understand Miss Luptik, a superb storyteller, a marvelous creator of mood, a lovely builder of climaxes, a born inciter to riot. Had Miss Luptik come along in the 1870's there would be only red faces on the North American continent. General Custer would never have got past Jersey.

Miss Luptik introduced us to the ebb and flow of Navaho life in easy stages. As the term moved on, according to her master plan, she lifted us along the way like canoes in the Panama Canal.

From digging for roots and grubs, we came to the spring feast. From swatting flies, we progressed to the shrieking hunt. From hello in the woods, we copulated under cactus.

Together, in a group as tightly made as Sipping Deer's mufflers, we achieved new levels of insight. Never suspecting, we traveled from fact to poetry.

With her wise face, her bouncy body and tinkly voice, Miss Luptik carried us. I, her enraptured papoose, went willingly. Strapped to her bony back, Blue Bear was happy.

The fluorescent sun and sprinkler-system rain bordered a terrific cosmos. Tender Tuesdays. Tremendous Thursdays.

Yet all this was only overture, a process of tenderizing. As it is with all instructors, Miss Luptik had her specialty. When she finished teasing us with trifles, when she reached the purple gut of her course, then know the navaho II ceased to be an experience and became a trauma.

Her specialty? Direct from life's cellar, *Myth and Magic,* the elemental sisters.

Miss Luptik began her lectures on what she called "the creatures of the wind" on a fine May morning. A puddle of yellow lit her desk. Our room glowed like the inside of a brown egg.

A black cutout standing in the glare, Miss Luptik cleared her throat and found her start. From her purse she produced a wooden doll with a feather on its head.

The doll was a squarish fellow, something like a B-picture robot, but decorated in the Indian manner with slashes of white and red. Miss Luptik held him at arm's length in total silence. Then, from the floor of her soul, she screamed, "Make rain."

Until that moment, our instructor had talked of migrations across the Bering Strait during the Ice Ages. She had talked of Mongoloid

traits, of longheads and roundheads, of layers of piled life, of seed gatherers and grinders, of modified basket-making peoples, of the *anasazi*—the ancient ones.

I listened, satisfied, studying the markings carved on the arm of my chair.

That day, Miss Luptik shed her skin. She added the dimension of horror. She connected up with eclipses, council fires, coyote howls, time itself. She burned like tobacco in long, thin pipes.

"Make rain."

It did not rain immediately. There was a drought that month. But my skull flooded. I nearly drowned in joy.

There was no question but that Miss Luptik was about to give beyond the demands of tuition.

"The higher tribes," Miss Luptik said, still holding her powerful didy doll, "believed deeply and devoutly in the Great Spirit, Father All Father, the Universe Man."

Her voice, as she spoke, took on a singsong, like Carl Sandburg's when he falls into his democratic trance. But it was not the shoes of industrial workers that sparked the instructor. It was bare feet on hot land.

"Say after me," she semi-sang.

"Great Spirit, Father All Father, Universe Man."

We made a good chorus. And we liked the tune. Trained in the monotheistic manner, we felt a kinship, knitters, note takers and Oliver A.

"Ambiguity," Miss Luptik said. "Paradox. Along with their faith in a single moving power, the dynamo of creation, our Indian brothers took an animistic view of daily life. *Wakonda*—life energy—filled everything. Everything. People and rocks. Flowers and sky. Day and night. *Wakonda."*

Nice, nice. Good, good. That was our reaction. For *Wakonda,* the life energy, had also visited the Bronx. Here was another idea that was familiar, therefore friendly.

"Say after me."

"Wakonda."

"Again once more."

"Wakonda."

"Wakonda was generally something to feel warm about. Why not? The smallest bug, the wee-est pebble had its chip of spirit. But the concept had its nasty side. *Wakonda Good, Wakonda Evil.* Mr. and Mrs. Navaho had their bogey men, too."

A knitter laughed. Miss Luptik frowned.

"Wakonda Good. Love. Babies. Corn. *Wakonda Evil.* Dwarfs. Ogres. Underwater people. Thunder people. Maize blight. Sickness. Sterility.

Death."

A note taker coughed. And coughed again. Miss Luptik was patient. She wet her upper lip with her tongue. The doll had not moved from her hand. Like the carving on a bowsprit, it gave dignity to her prow.

When the coughing spasm subsided, Miss Luptik raised her second arm and held it suspended at an angle of roughly ninety degrees to its companion.

"What a treasury of lore sprang from this simple belief. Epic poems, Greek tragedies have nothing on the creations of the first Americans. Oh Red Man, how inspired you were in the naked days before we brought you smallpox, measles, syphilis and gold."

Miss Luptik upped her voice an octave. There was something in her manner that made me twitch. I could feel her accelerating. A vessel in her neck swelled with pressure. My left eyelid jumped in response.

"Children of the land, what have we done to you? Today, the holy Shaman watches Ed Sullivan before conducting his rites. Our cancer culture presses in like fingers on a throat. Rice Krispies and insecticide stifle the Star Maker and the Animal Wife."

"Who?" said a note taker. "Animal who?"

"Shoosh," a neighbor whispered.

"Think back!" Miss Luptik said, in her "Make rain!" tone. She conducted with her free hand.

"Think back," we said. "Think back."

"Think back many moons."

"Think back many moons," we said, an obedient philharmonic.

"Think back to the time of rich earth, clear streams, pure sky, steaming beasts, sharp teeth. Think back to the time of strong *medicine."*

"Strong medicine. Strong medicine. Strong medicine."

"Medicine made from the human heart and the human head. Not cheese mold. No hypodermic remedy injected into the tushy. Medicine catapulted into the bloodstream by lightning in the navel, by the shaft of fear."

Miss Mayberry dropped a plastic needle. It bounced, rolled and ended up at my feet. I let it lie.

"Medicine of flesh and for flesh. Medicine to make vegetables grow. Medicine to fill squaw belly with kicking sons. Medicine to rip the enemy. Medicine to chase blood-drinking ghosts. Medicine for fire, for water, for sunrise. Medicine for resurrection. Think back to the time of magic. Back, back, back. Let your brains be the land in a world of *Wakonda."*

Miss Luptik dropped both arms to her sides and stood rigid, like a

palace guard. She began to chant. Then she moved in a kind of religious box step. With a quick wrist motion she told us what she wanted, and we gave it to her. We stood in our places, duplicated her sounds and moved our feet. It was like singing a national anthem for a faraway flag.

Again she stopped suddenly and covered her face with her hands. Then she kissed the little doll, and held it to the girl sitting nearest to her desk. The girl kissed the doll, and passed it along. We all kissed the doll and it was returned, smudged with lipstick, to Miss Luptik's right hand.

By the last and final kiss, we were had. With glazed eyes and open ears we entered the time of magic. Like a dentist tests his Novacaine, Miss Luptik tested our involvement by dropping the doll. Nobody moved. The doll, a plump fellow, took a short journey and came to rest two inches from Miss Mayberry's knitting needle, an arrow pointed at its nose.

How can I tell you what happened next? I can only describe the skeleton. You must add the nerves and tubes.

Miss Luptik introduced us to the workaday gods and devils of the Navaho. She knew them so well, she could show us, in words, how they looked, what they wore, what or who they ate, how they played, how they were calmed, what they controlled, who they rewarded, who they destroyed.

For some reason, possibly of curriculum, possibly of need, possibly because Miss Luptik was then into a malevolent chapter of her Ph.D. thesis, she ran through the *Wakonda Goods* in three minutes flat, then swung over to the other camp. Here, in the kingdom of open sores, many legs, fuzzy bodies and pincers, Miss Luptik seemed curiously at home. Each creature Miss Luptik dragged up from the swamp was a separate Hitler, a swirl of claws and gore. In the sunny, dry classroom, Miss Luptik brewed bitter herbs. We sank in her soup, ankles, knees, thighs, middles, chests, necks, chins, mouths, noses, eyes, hair. We simmered together in an old clay pot.

Miss Luptik ran around the room begging for plants to grow, calling to the heart of each seed, begging the thunder people to rumble the world's ovaries, fighting off demons, raising the dead, harvesting beans, butchering birds, cursing age, sucking at youth, licking strength from the fiery sun, then tonguing the cold moon for relief.

I stared down at the fallen doll. It grew, a tidal wave of sour protoplasm, slashed in color, its fat feather a weapon. I, Oliver August, who lights three on a match, was frightened half to death by the skinny instructor in the tight girdle. Miss Luptik was some new kind of ventriloquist. She spoke through the doll. And she, in turn, was

someone else's puppet.

Wakonda Bad rolled into a snake, crept like warm ooze into my head through the ear. And a strange and secondary magic occurred for me. The slap of red hands on stretched hide, the tomtom throbbing of Miss Luptik's voice, changed to another music. Yellow hands beat drums of human meat. Chow Mein mixed with feathers. *Wakonda Bad* developed an urge for gold fillings. He wanted mine, and my belly button for a nose ring.

All fear has one mother. My mouth dried. My armpits were drenched. My neck tingled. I couldn't breathe.

Slap! Miss Luptik clapped her hands. I fell five miles, breaking to pieces. Talk about timing. One minute before the bell, Miss Luptik returned us to the world.

In epilogue, a changed Miss Luptik, the familiar Miss Luptik, said in a chatty summary, "The dear Navahos knew their gods the way we know our own moles. They talked to them, prayed to them, made offerings to them. But they never never never *depicted* them. They never drew the gods. It was an inconceivable act, the worst imaginable sin. Think on that. Isn't it the perfect testimony to pure horror? Isn't it the essence of belief? They felt, with wisdom handed down through millenniums, that if the gods were drawn, the image would leap up and devour the artist. Crunch. Fini."

The bell rang. Miss Luptik asked me to hand her the doll. She took it, dropped it into her bag, and left the room with gorgeous poise.

Later, Oliver August lay thinking of dark forces.

Our apartment was on the second floor. The neon sign from the candy store downstairs flashed on and off, a green guardian through the troubled nights of my childhood. That night I noticed the sign again after long years. I was glad to have it. I lay in bed thinking how shrewd were those Indian gods to avoid too much exposure, to put their faith in a kind of spiritual radio. How much worse is the *imagined* avenger, the *shadow* who knows.

Pictures or no, the peculiar truth is if the Rain God came walking on the Grand Concourse, I would recognize him instantly.

Some miles downtown and east, where the Island of Manhattan begins to narrow, Marilyn Mayberry was also awake.

"Good morning," said cheerful Marilyn Mayberry on the following Thursday.

She came late, dressed for a party in a soft pink dress, a pink hat with a wide brim, white alligator shoes and bag, and long white gloves. Under a chubby arm, she carried a leather portfolio.

"Good morning, Sipping Deer," Miss Luptik said.

Minutes before, I blushed when the teacher arrived at class. After

Tuesday's experience there was an intimacy between us. The night of her epic lecture, I had her three times in a series of greedy, protective dreams. Since then, this was our first daylight encounter.

When Miss Mayberry entered I was sadly accepting the fact that Miss Luptik would never again duplicate the Tuesday emotion. Her old self, she was telling us about ceremonies of initiation. She was strong but not possessed. Facing the truth was difficult. It was as if a doctor said to me, "Oliver, your stomach is ruined. You will never eat shrimps again."

"I drew the gods," Miss Mayberry said.

"Beg pardon, dear."

"I drew your big old nasty gods. I drew them as an extra term project."

"Ah?"

"I think they would look nice hanging around the room."

Miss Mayberry pulled the zipper that held her portfolio together. She lifted out a pile of drawing boards. In living color, before our eyes, Miss Mayberry displayed her gallery of gods. Each drawing bore a legend:

> we are of the fire
> i make the sun to burn
> give us corn, oh corn spirit
> i am black death in the storm
> bow low to me, brave hunter

etcetera, etcetera. All the gods, sneering, grimacing, or passive and smoldering, had a striking resemblance to Robert Mitchum.

Miss Mayberry beamed. She positively beamed.

"I brought wall tacks," she said.

"How creative," Miss Luptik said.

Then Miss Mayberry tacked up the gods. Miss Luptik worked along. She had been taken completely by surprise. Miss Mayberry won the day without losing an arrow.

As I sat watching, in the greenhouse of my heart a hatred bloomed simply and sweetly—a clean, neat hatred for the pink, ripe, bitchy, muffler-knitting, big-knockered, tight-assed Marilyn Mayberry. Instantly, easily, absolutely without anger, I swore vengeance on her for this fantastic act of total blasphemy. Without ado, the gods appointed Oliver August as their ambassador in this matter of honor. I accepted the job without hesitation.

How come?

To this day I can only speculate. Perhaps because I had only recently learned about being afraid. Miss Luptik allowed me to see

something of dignity and beauty in that dirty emotion. The darkness is *real.* The *Wakonda Bads* are a bopping gang. There is reason to crap carefully during new moon, and therefore real reason to huddle together.

Having learned about fear, I learned about need. But all this was new and vulnerable insight.

Miss Marilyn Mayberry, on the other hand, was impatient with unseen phantoms. Tranquil since teething, tranquil she would remain. Undoubtedly she too had been disturbed by Miss Luptik's doll, but she refused to nurse its ugly hunger. Her mother had warned her not to play jacks with the Wind People. There was too much going on, hope chests to fill, the promise of weddings and babies. So, a true child of science, she drew the gods and nearly killed them all.

The girl came close to wiping out all of Hell. That, of course, was really the terrible penalty the Indians suspected —that the evil gods *would* die, leaving nothing, not a stain, but only tepid paradise.

I screamed for blood. I swore to drill Marilyn Mayberry to some carpet, somewhere, with the bluntest instrument I could think of. That was the way it had to be, the only way to save the universe.

Imagine, I of tender passions, Oliver, who turned my adolescent eyes from those long, thin books that showed Popeye and Olive Oyl making love. I, the lonely dreamer, the nibbler of rose petals. I had grown feathers. I painted my face. Miss Mayberry was my buffalo. I wanted a coat made of her.

The pictures hung, the class went on. I heard Miss Luptik's voice, but not the words. For the first time in my life, I had a single purpose. Already I was busy with blueprints.

After class, looking eager, I invited Miss Mayberry for a coke. She thought things over. I had a difficult moment. Did her antenna pick up static?

She said yes.

From then, to the end, it was a quaint courtship.

In the early phase my biggest problem was to conceal my red identity.

There is a story about a prince who was lonely. One day, looking at one of his fields from the castle tower, he saw a maiden. He wanted the maiden, so he saddled his white horse and galloped to where she was picking strawberries.

Around and around he rode, but the maiden never looked up. So back he rode and fell into depression. His wise man was called to diagnose the trouble. When he heard the prince's story, he patted his royal head. He told the prince to sleep and seek guidance in a dream.

The prince slept and dreamed. He dreamed he rode a green horse. When he woke up the message hit him right away. He called his

groom and ordered the groom to paint his stallion green.

"Green?" the groom said.

"Uh huh," answered the prince. "Get the picture: I ride down to the field where this maiden is picking. She sees me on a green horse. Then she says, 'Heavens, Sire, your horse is green.' And I say, 'Yes, beautiful lady. I am the prince.' In a week, I send her flowers. In two weeks, I send her jewels. In a month, I grant her daddy a fief. In six months, I take my pleasure."

"Great," said the groom, and painted the horse green.

Later, the prince saw the maiden. He jumped on his green horse and went flying down to the field. Around and around he rode, but nothing happened. He rode faster, the horse snorting, the prince in a lather. Finally, the maiden looked up from her strawberry patch.

"Heavens, Sire," she said in a golden voice, "your horse is green."

"Yes, beautiful lady," said the prince, "and in six months we're going to screw."

My situation was similar. The important thing was to go slow and steady. Dressing for dates, I double-checked my fly. I used my sister's deodorant. I chewed Dentyne and gargled with Lavoris. I trimmed my pointy nails. Nothing should offend. No jagged ends should telegraph jagged intentions.

I followed a perfect timetable, forcing my mind to think like a German. It was two ballets at City Center, an Italian movie and an off-Broadway revival of *The Tempest* before I even touched her hand.

When I touched, she pulled away. I did not pursue with reckless fingers. I made a fist, as if in suffering, and rested the fist on the arm of my seat.

No need to give you every detail. Student romance is not the most interesting of subjects. You know how things go, in chords and flashes.

A human totem pole, with all the faces mine and smiling, I took Marilyn Mayberry into various worlds. If she did not like green horses, I would use brown paint. If not brown, lavender.

What did she like the best? Art? We went to the Modern Museum where she showed a taste for Edward Hopper's picture of an usher in the movies.

"I like films," she said. "And not only uptown. Right in the neighborhood is just as good."

I took her to movies.

"I like foreign," she said. "But I think people who criticize Hollywood are artsy-craftsy snobs."

Remembering the Mitchum-faced gods, I confessed a love for the Warner Brothers.

Sports?

"Basketball is nice. The rest I can take or leave."

The basketball season was over, so we left.

Books?

"I read and read," she said. "And read and read and read. Do you enjoy Thomas Wolfe? I do."

"I do."

"Look Homeward Angel."

"Oh yes."

Food? She loved Chinese, a touchy subject in those days, but I went along.

"You order from group A."

"No, really."

"Go on. I'll order from group B."

"Let's start with wonton."

"Wonton is lovely. Two wonton soups, please. And chopsticks. We'll eat with chopsticks."

"I couldn't. Olly, I just couldn't."

"You can. Sure you can. I just know you can."

Meal after meal, I grappled with stilts. A winner down the line, Marilyn Mayberry never dropped a grain of pork fried rice or a single snow pea.

How I hated that girl.

Gradually, I got to know her. So comfortable within her healthy skin, Marilyn Mayberry was absolutely without pangs. She had never felt hunger. The few appetites that stirred in her were appetites for future feeding, and she was calm and confident that her table would be set in due time. This was not a girl who would sleep with a frog on the chance of morning metamorphosis. There was enough in the world to keep her happy. Why gamble when it is so much easier, and safer, to simply be cautious?

She liked everything about the twentieth century, from the Double-Crostics in the *Times* to Jackie Gleason. And she seemed to like them equally.

Oliver Chameleon, camouflaging my secret heart, took on painful coloration. When Marilyn Mayberry bought the *New Yorker,* we went to little theaters where they served Coffee in cups designed for thin lips. When she wished to rest from the better things, she would tell me about "when I was a little girl" and we would end up watching that mighty milleped called the Rockettes at Radio City.

Music was important too. So, many of our evenings ended with Marilyn tapping her glass with a swizzle while five obsolete Negroes and a sprinkle of middle-aged Caucasians belched Dixieland. *When the Saints Go Marching In.* I sang along, all right, but with my own words, celebrating my own dream of entrance.

We came closer. Close enough to discuss the great controversy

between square-cut and pear-shaped diamonds, the need for adequate insurance, the matter of discipline in the raising of children and how weddings were made for parents and grandparents. We talked about D. H. Lawrence, for whom we felt sorry, and Barry Goldwater, for whom we did not.

And we came closer. We held hands on campus. We kissed in her hall. By the end of May, outside her door, while she fumbled for keys, I pressed her breast and she bit my cheek.

On the bus going home, I rejoiced.

Around that time, I can't exactly remember dates, the gods began visiting me each night They looked so harried, I worried.

"White boy," said the fellow in charge of Household Misery, "hurry yourself. We're fading fast. Necessity is the mother of redemption."

"I'm doing my best," I said. "I'm keeping tight lines of supply. Positions must be consolidated."

"You know how Douglas MacArthur feels about lethargy," the god said.

"I know," I said. "I know."

Marilyn Mayberry retreated suddenly. Was it her intuition? For a week she wouldn't let me near her. She skipped our Tuesday class, and on Thursday she sat near the door. She broke our Wednesday date. I saw her walking on Riverside Drive eating ice cream with a total stranger. Thwarted love is bad. Thwarted vengeance is awful.

Each night, the gods *tch-tched.*

I doubled my efforts. Desperately, using everything I knew or suspected, I sought to fill Marilyn Mayberry's life with aphrodisiacs.

Based on a magazine article I read in my sister's *Ladies Home Journal,* I encouraged Marilyn to eat spicy foods.

"My upper lip is sweating, Olly."

"Have more sauce."

"No. I'll dehydrate."

"Curry is supposed to punish. That's the gourmet's way."

"No, Olly. No sauce."

To stimulate her mentally, I spent twenty dollars on a copy of the *Kama-Sutra* and followed with *A Doctor Looks at Sex.*

"The first book was terrible. They spend so much time thinking about new positions it's no wonder their gross national product is way down. They need construction manuals, not marriage manuals."

"Whoever said the *Kama-Sutra* was a marriage manual?"

"Well, people *sleep* together. The second book was sensible. I lent it to my mother."

I took her to the Persian Room to watch Hildegarde.

I championed the wearing of loose-fitting garments.

I planned picnics in Central Park, where we watched the seals.

I took her to the American Museum of Natural History to feel the great presence of dinosaurs.

We went to the Hayden Planetarium to watch stars being born and nebulae whirl.

"Some day man will probe the mystery of outer space."

"Olly, do you believe that? Why?"

"The sun will enlarge and burn the earth to a crisp. We'll have to venture into new worlds if the human race is to survive."

"When?"

"What difference does that make?"

"When?"

Only one thing kept me going. Every Tuesday and Thursday I saw her pictures hanging on the wall behind Miss Luptik and my diabolical battery recharged. I saw the pale and beaten Miss Luptik sink into predictability, and I raged freshly.

Then, of course, there were the dreams. The poor gods, clinging to existence, were gasping for a hero. One even suggested that my cousin Marvin, who I saw on major holidays, might do a better job.

The thing that brought Marilyn Mayberry into contact again was the bell at Riverside Church.

From a Juilliard student who lived on my block, I learned that every Saturday at noon there is a concert in the church tower. High above the city, in a small glass room, a bellringer comes to play the carillon.

For ten cents, visitors are welcome to take the elevator up, walk two additional flights, stand on a landing enclosed by stone arches, and listen.

The main bell hangs in the tower's center. It was designed to rouse spirits as far away as Teaneck, which is across the Hudson River.

When I heard about it, I conceived a scheme so basically rotten that I hesitate to give descriptions. My plan was to vibrate Marilyn Mayberry into submission. Thinking like the Old Testament, I believed that if she were exposed to *total* vibration over a sustained period of say five minutes from her arches to her scalp, her defenses would crash like the walls of Jericho.

It came to pass.

We went, innocently, to the church. We paid our dimes. We breached the tower.

At twelve, the bell began.

It boomed gobs of sound so rich and full that we did not hear them. They *hit* us. Up there, with the city on one side, the river on the other, we drowned in bongs. It was fearsome.

I had neglected to consider my own reaction to the massed

decibels of Bach. Quasimodo would have lost his pants. Marilyn Mayberry started to cry, and despite myself, I joined her.

We held on to each other, shaking, while a tone-deaf pigeon watched. The bell went on and on. When a man and a woman vibrate so thoroughly, something changes between them.

When we came down, I knew from Marilyn's expression that my conquest was no longer a matter of will-she, but when-will-she. It was time to think of time and place.

This can be a real problem for city youth. I have heard of a fellow who rented a safe-deposit box at Manufacturers-Hanover Trust for $6.60 per year so that he can take his girls to the little room where they let you count your money down near the vault.

A friend of my family was leaving for the mountains. It became my responsibility to water their plants. I asked Marilyn to come with me. She did, and she didn't. In the shade of the window garden, she told me the story of a "fellow" she knew who had violated a woman's confidence in a similar situation. I looked down at the African violets and lost the urge to cohabitation.

The gods chided me that night. I hardly recognized them. They were fatter, more confident, ready for deliverance. I warned them about premature optimism, but they laughed anyhow.

A poet I know was called back to Brooklyn due to some crisis. He had his own room in the Village. He asked me to look in on his sick cat. Would Marilyn come with me? She would, and she wouldn't. Together we fed kidneys to the cat. Such grateful mewing could melt glaciers, but not Miss Mayberry. She allowed me a hand underneath her rayon blouse, but in back.

Still, the gods continued to celebrate. I warned them. They winked.

Marilyn had to baby-sit for her aunt. The baby, a formless bag of feces, slept in a lump. We sat on a soft couch, which was made up for the night since Marilyn was to stay over.

We lay side by side for two hours without movement like members of the Young Communist League on bivouac. I went home in a crouch.

Even then the gods cheered the minute I closed my eyes.

Like the prince with the horse, it took some time for me to get the message. Through the Western Union of sleep, it came to Oliver August that Marilyn Mayberry, not I, would pick the time and place. A girl who drew gods would certainly want to design the stage set for her own greatest moment.

I waited. Days passed.

A week following I got a letter from the draft board. They wanted to examine my body. I was no longer worried about the legions of

Mao. I *was* worried about the legions of Mr. Rain, Mr. Sun, Mr. Corn, Mr. Buffalo, Mr. Forest, Mr. Fire, Mr. Death, Mr. Birth, Mr. Pain and Miss Moon.

The letter was a catalyst. I showed it to Marilyn Mayberry. She invited me out to dinner on the night before my physical.

We went to a French restaurant called the Fleur de Lys. Marilyn kept her eyes on me while eating snails, filet of sole, and an eclair. I ordered an artichoke. Peeling the leaves, revealing the heart, swallowing it in garlic butter, daubing with my napkin, I was the soul of seriousness.

After dinner, still on her allowance, we rode in a hansom cab through Central Park, then sat by the bird sanctuary lake on 59th Street watching a matted swan and talking about destiny until the police chased us.

During our hour on the park bench, Marilyn told me many things, but the one that especially impressed me was the revelation that she had planned her wedding at the age of ten.

She described it, down to the point where a line of waiters carry flaming Baked Alaska into the dining room while she squeezes her husband's leg under the table.

Her apartment had been mentally furnished a year before first menstruation. She wanted white French Provincial. She was on her way. Her mother had bought her a hope chest the size of a cave, and since she was "weensy," uncles, aunts, cousins, friends and acquaintances had been stocking it. With her head on my shoulder, Marilyn informed me that she was indeed a girl of property.

In a soft voice, she asked me about careers. I was ready for her questions.

"A man needs direction," I said. "I have my goal. If I am fortunate enough to leave the Army in reasonably good condition, I'm going into corporation law. You may not think that a dramatic occupation, Marilyn. But that's what I want. And it's not only the money, which is substantial. The organization of business has always intrigued me. And, on the higher levels, a businessman can share his career with his woman."

I looked up. The gods were sitting in a row on top of the Plaza Hotel just behind us. I saw them eating an antelope hock and generally carrying on. The vision nearly spoiled my speech.

Late, very late, Marilyn Mayberry and I went home.

She lived with her mother and brother in a solid apartment house on Lexington Avenue. Until that night, our farewells were said outside her door. I had never crossed her threshold. The brother, a teenager, slept in an alcove and was trained to bite the ankle of any stranger.

When we reached her apartment, I took her in my arms. She

pushed me away. My temperature dropped sharply. I was confused, but not for long.

Marilyn beckoned. She led me to another door down the [1] corridor. And from her evening bag she produced a key with a new set of teeth.

"My sister Betty and her husband Irv live here," she said. "They have darling twins, Jerome and Charlotte. I want you to see the babies."

"It's three-thirty," I said.

"Betty and Irv don't mind. The kids' room is off the foyer. Come on. Nothing wakes them. Nothing."

I went.

We unlocked the door, clicking as quietly as possible. Marilyn took off her shoes. Me too. Like burglars, we entered the dark apartment.

Feeling her way, Marilyn took me to a room. Inside, a nightlight burned between two cribs. Two nice-looking children scrunched under blankets, one pink, one blue.

"Sweet? Yes?"

"Yes."

"Milk and cake?"

"If nobody minds."

We tiptoed again through darkness and found our way to the kitchen.

"Hush. Be a mouse."

Marilyn turned on the fluorescent. It flickered, missed, ignited, blazed. There we were. But where?

That kitchen was like nothing I had ever seen. I enjoy the stamp of domesticity. But such a stamp.

The scene in brief: dirty dishes filled a table. Bottles of half-eaten baby food sat on the sink. Boxes of cereal, a bowl of fruit, wet towels, drippy Brillo pads, pans, a pile of chicken bones, and other testimonials to life lived covered every surface.

And the wash. The wash.

There was wash everyplace. Steel ribs on the ceiling were full of wash. A straw basket, of the modified Navaho type, was full of wash. A machine with its door open had a clump of wash hanging out, and a portable rack near the stove hung wash like a willow.

Food, dishes, bones, soap pads, the fantastic dangling wash came together in the brittle light. We stood in a tree house, engulfed in the foliage of an active marriage.

Marilyn grinned.

"Betty is such a slob," she said.

At three-thirty-six, Eastern Daylight Time, we stood on blue

linoleum. Dew from a turkish towel, or was it a diaper, fell on my forehead. Did Marilyn mistake it for a tear?

The drop ran down my nose, in business for itself, seeking the way to the universal ocean of human misery. And I saw a drop on Marilyn's cheek take the same journey.

"Are you crying?" I said.

The fluorescents blazed onto the blue linoleum. Like bathers testing the water, we stood together and shivered. I heard the gods howl from behind a Sanforized house dress. Mostly I heard my heart. I looked at my wristwatch. The second hand flew.

"Why are you crying?" I said.

Marilyn shrugged. She played with my tie. I kissed her on the neck.

"Are you crying because this is Army Physical Eve?" I said. "Is that it?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Well stop, please," I said. "You're confusing me."

"I'm sorry."

"I think we'd better say goodnight," I said.

One of the gods coughed up phlegm.

"Here we are," Marilyn said.

"Goodnight," I said.

"No," Marilyn said.

She opened two buttons of my shirt and slipped her hand in. Her hand was cool, a delicious temperature.

"I know how much you want to make love to me," she said.

"Someday, dear," I said. "Tomorrow we'll find a place. I'll rent a car. We'll drive to a motel on a mountain."

"I've known," she said. "Don't you think I've known?"

"I knew you knew," I said.

"Take off your stupid jacket," Marilyn said.

"It's late as hell," I said.

She took off my stupid jacket.

"I want to feel your chest against mine," she said.

"Look, dear," I said. "Your sister is inside. Your brother-in-law . . ."

Marilyn took off my shirt. First she worked on my cufflinks and dropped them into the little pocket, then she did the rest.

"No T shirt?" she said. "Unzip me."

Marilyn turned around. I unzipped her. She pulled her dress over her head. Then she reached behind herself and unhooked her bra. I slipped the bra off her soft shoulders.

Her breasts tumbled out like children at recess. We pressed together. Marilyn kissed my ear. It occurred to me that Oliver August,

the vengeful seducer, had never opened a single button.

"Make me naked," Marilyn said.

I made her naked. In the Garden of Lux, in the oilcloth pool, she looked remarkably fine.

"Be naked with me."

I was naked with her.

"Hold me."

I held her. The cool sweetness of her hand was total. I think I moaned. My moan set the gods cheering. Marilyn heard music.

Oliver August and Marilyn Mayberry fitted beautifully together. Together, we marveled at the coincidence.

Standing, grasping, moving slowly, in time's own kitchen, under an umbrella of laundry, we made love.

"Go away," I yelled to the gods.

"Oh," Marilyn said, hugging tighter.

"Not you," I said. "Oh sweet, not you."

We made too much noise.

Her sister, a light sleeper, was attuned to all city dangers. For years, with the acuteness of those suspicious of fire escapes (every exit is an entrance), she rested with an open ear. Our tender battle in the place where she cooked for her own was enough to wake her twice. Like Betty, Irving came awake clearheaded and primed for attack.

Have you ever covered private parts with a sopping bib?

Bravely, Marilyn stood with me. For some time, two couples stared at one another. Then Betty hollered and Marilyn turned toward the stove. Irving went inside to get me his bathrobe.

I grew quickly engaged.

Shortly thereafter, I was allowed a glimpse into the mouth of my fiance's hope chest. I saw treasure which would have shamed Captain Kidd. Material things meant little to me then. I was young and foolish.

Our engagement did not last long. We were, it seemed, very different. Before choosing our bedroom set, or even our silver pattern, we began to drift. After all, we were total strangers. Once, in Tanglewood, we fell asleep after Stravinsky and never woke to each other. Unprepared for such relaxation, we said goodbye.

Oh yes. The draft board rejected me for nerves and a bent knee.

In September, Marilyn was wed to an accountant. She invited me to the wedding. I went. Even Betty did a cha-cha with me, and the Baked Alaska was indeed hot and sweet

The gods left my dreams. I assume they returned to Arizona. Our parting was friendly, but I am convinced that their immortality was diluted by the whole experience.

Wakonda Manhattan is its own strong medicine.

Time advances. After heavenly vengeance, reality is a warm

shower.

Miss Luptik is now Dr. Luptik. She spends summers with such corn grinders as remain. We correspond.

As for Oliver August, I found my own tribe.

Today I have a store. I give green stamps with pleasure. I sleep beside a mountain of heat.

"Come back inside," she always says.

Three kids ask me questions and the smell of me gives them security.

You know my hobby? I take pictures. I snap my Polaroid and flash my flash and fill albums by the pound. I take so many pictures the druggist asks if I am some kind of Jap.

It is not that I am a tourist-on my own street. My pictures are pieces of a jigsaw. When it is finished I believe I will have something to look at.

The druggist, a philosopher, says picture taking is for idiots. He says time should not be saved except in the heart.

"All we need," he said this morning, "is a picture of God. The rest is a waste of clicking."

"God wouldn't pose for a picture," I said. "He doesn't need publicity."

"Sure He would pose," said the druggist. "He would love it. He could look on himself and feel impressed. Take Him a picture, Oliver. Be a sport. It would do us all good. Probably nobody asked Him. Maybe He has a shyness."

"All right," I said. "I'll take Him a picture."

"Take two," said the druggist, "in case He moves."

Tonight in the tub I noticed a gray curly hair float like a gondola of nostalgia. It drifted to the drain. I watched it swirl and go bubbling down.

Then I heard myself say out loud to the tiles, "Dear Marilyn. Dear Book of Knowledge. Marilyn *knew!"*

Harvey Jacobs was born in New York City In 1930, attended the New York public schools, and went on to Syracuse University, in New York State—where he returned a few years later as an instructor in the university's Writers' Workshop. He is now manager of public relations for Worldvision, ABC's (soon to be satellite-relayed) network of TV stations in twenty-five countries. Between flying business trips to odd corners of the world, he lives, with his wife and baby son, Adam, in the executive-suite-near-West-Side section of Greenwich Village.

J. G. Ballard was born in Shanghai in 1930, the son of a Scottish doctor resident in an American section of Shanghai. He was interned in a Japanese prison camp during World War II, and repatriated to

England in 1946, where he spent a brief period at a proper boys' public school, before going on to read medicine at Cambridge. He has traveled extensively in the Mediterranean countries and spent a tour of duty with the RAF in Canada. A widower, he now lives in a row-house middle-middle-class London suburb with his three children, James Jr., Faye, and Beatrice.

Jacobs sold his first story to Tomorrow magazine in 1950, while still in college. Shortly afterwards, he went to work in public relations for the United Jewish Appeal and then the Weizmann Institute of Science; then a spell with the *Village Voice,* in its first year of publication, after which he set up shop (briefly) as editor/publisher of his own newspaper *(East,* in what was not yet known as the East Village). In 1958, he settled down in a job with ABC-TV. Meantime, he had sold his second story, to *Esquire,* in 1954, and was beginning to appear in other national magazines.

Ballard won the annual short-story contest at Cambridge in 1951. Shortly afterwards, he went to work as an advertising copywriter; then a spell in the RAF, after which he returned to London and became a script-writer for scientific films. In 1956 he made his first sale as a professional fiction writer to *Science Fantasy* ("Prima Belladonna," reprinted in the *2nd Annual),* and began appearing regularly in the British s-f magazines. Gollancz published his first novel, and then a short-story collection.

In 1962, Jacobs wrote and produced the first satellite-relayed TV show linking European and American broadcasting systems, and beamed to Japan The *International World of Sports.* He also had a prize-winning story in *Playboy.* His fiction has since appeared in a wide range of publications, including *Midstream, Status, Nugget, Family Circle,* and *Ladies' Home Journal.*

In 1962, Ballard's work began to appear in the American magazines (*Amazing* and *Fantastic* originally), and Berkley Books did his first novel and two short story collections in paperback. Since then, three more novels have been published (in both countries) and five more collections. Both fiction and, recently, critical writings have appeared in literary and popular publications outside the specially fields his work has been widely anthologized, translated, and reprinted.

In the spring of 1965, Jacobs' story about the death of gods appeared in *Mademoiselle,* and Ballard's story about the drowned giant in *Playboy.* As I write this, Ballard is discussing a TV show with the BBC, and Jacobs is discussing the possibility of publication of some of his work in the British s-f magazines.

These two men come—literally and literarily—from opposite ends of the earth. Their voices—symbols, images, diction, speech rhythms,

narrative techniques—are as different as their backgrounds. But there are no longer any places on earth as remote as Shanghai and New York were thirty-five years ago.

Because each of them is a serious and skillful writer, each man tells his story in a form uniquely his own, in the personal language of his own inner world. Because each of them is a serious and perceptive writer, the stories they tell are vitally related, in the outside, "real" world.

Or (to paraphrase Ciardi): For a writer to be able to talk in his own language (which he is forever inventing) is almost the next thing to a reality.

* * * *

THE DROWNED GIANT
J. G. BALLARD

On the morning after the storm the body of a drowned giant was washed ashore on the beach five miles to the northwest of the city. The first news of its arrival was brought by a nearby farmer and subsequently confirmed by the local newspaper reporters and the police. Despite this the majority of people, I among them, remained skeptical, but the return of more and more eyewitnesses attesting to the vast size of the giant was finally too much for our curiosity. The library where my colleagues and I were carrying out our research was almost deserted when we set off for the coast shortly after two o'clock, and throughout the day people continued to leave their offices and shops as accounts of the giant circulated around the city.

By the time we reached the dunes above the beach, a substantial crowd had gathered, and we could see the body lying in the shallow water two hundred yards away. At first the estimates of its size seemed greatly exaggerated. It was then at low tide, and almost all the giant's body was exposed, but he appeared to be little larger than a basking shark. He lay on his back with his arms at his sides, in an attitude of repose, as if asleep on the mirror of wet sand, the reflection of his blanched skin fading as the water receded. In the clear sunlight his body glistened like the white plumage of a seabird.

Puzzled by this spectacle and dissatisfied with the matter-of-fact explanations of the crowd, my friends and I stepped down from the dunes onto the shingle. Everyone seemed reluctant to approach the giant, but half an hour later two fishermen in wading boots walked out across the sand. As their diminutive figures neared the recumbent body, a sudden hubbub of conversation broke out among the spectators. The two men were completely dwarfed by the giant. Although his heels were partly submerged in the sand, the feet rose to at least twice the fishermen's height, and we immediately realized that this drowned leviathan had the mass and dimensions of the largest sperm whale.

Three fishing smacks had arrived on the scene and with keels raised remained a quarter of a mile offshore, the crews watching from the bows. Their discretion deterred the spectators on the shore from wading out across the sand. Impatiently everyone stepped down from the dunes and waited on the single slopes, eager for a closer view. Around the margins of the figure the sand had been washed away, forming a hollow, as if the giant had fallen out of the sky. The two

fishermen were standing between the immense plinths of the feet, waving to us like tourists among the columns of some water-lapped temple on the Nile. For a moment I feared that the giant was merely asleep and might suddenly stir and clap his heels together, but his glazed eyes stared skyward, unaware of the minuscule replicas of himself between his feet.

The fishermen then began a circuit of the corpse, strolling past the long white flanks of the legs. After a pause to examine the fingers of the supine hand, they disappeared from sight between the arm and chest, then reemerged to survey the head, shielding their eyes as they gazed up at its Grecian profile. The shallow forehead, straight high-bridged nose, and curling lips reminded me of a Roman copy of Praxiteles, and the elegantly formed cartouches of the nostrils emphasized the resemblance to sculpture.

Abruptly there was a shout from the crowd, and a hundred arms pointed to the sea. With a start I saw that one of the fishermen had climbed onto the giant's chest and was now strolling about and signaling to the shore. There was a roar of surprise and triumph from the crowd, lost in a rushing avalanche of shingle as everyone surged forward across the sand.

As we approached the recumbent figure, which was lying in a pool of water the size of a field, our excited chatter fell away again, subdued by the huge physical dimensions of this dead colossus. He was stretched out at a slight angle to the shore, his legs carried nearer the beach, and this foreshortening had disguised his true length. Despite the two fishermen standing on his abdomen, the crowd formed itself into a wide circle, groups of people tentatively advancing toward the hands and feet.

My companions and I walked around the seaward side of the giant, whose hips and thorax towered above us like the hull of a stranded ship. His pearl-colored skin, distended by immersion in saltwater, masked the contours of the enormous muscles and tendons. We passed below the left knee, which was flexed slightly, threads of damp seaweed clinging to its sides. Draped loosely across the midriff, and preserving a tenuous propriety, was a shawl of heavy open-weave material, bleached to a pale yellow by the water. A strong odor of brine came from the garment as it steamed in the sun, mingled with the sweet, potent scent of the giant's skin.

We stopped by his shoulder and gazed up at the motionless profile. The lips were parted slightly, the open eye cloudy and occluded, as if injected with some blue milky liquid, but the delicate arches of the nostrils and eyebrows invested the face with an ornate charm that belied the brutish power of the chest and shoulders.

The ear was suspended in midair over our heads like a sculptured

doorway. As I raised my hand to touch the pendulous lobe, someone appeared over the edge of the forehead and shouted down at me. Startled by this apparition, I stepped back, and then saw that a group of youths had climbed up onto the face and were jostling each other in and out of the orbits.

People were now clambering all over the giant, whose reclining arms provided a double stairway. From the palms they walked along the forearms to the elbows and then crawled over the distended belly of the biceps to the flat promenade of the pectoral muscles which covered the upper half of the smooth hairless chest. From here they climbed up onto the face, hand over hand along the lips and nose, or forayed down the abdomen to meet others who had straddled the ankles and were patrolling the twin columns of the thighs.

We continued our circuit through the crowd and stopped to examine the outstretched right hand. A small pool of water lay in the palm, like the residue of another world, now being kicked away by the people ascending the arm. I tried to read the palm lines that grooved the skin, searching for some clue to the giant's character, but the distention of the tissues had almost obliterated them, carrying away all trace of the giant's identity and his last tragic predicament. The huge muscles and wristbones of the hand seemed to deny any sensitivity to their owner, but the delicate flection of the fingers and the well-tended nails, each cut symmetrically to within six inches of the quick, argued a certain refinement of temperament, illustrated in the Grecian features of the face, on which the townsfolk were now sitting like flies.

One youth was even standing, arms waving at his sides, on the very tip of the nose, shouting down at his companions, but the face of the giant still retained its massive composure.

Returning to the shore, we sat down on the shingle and watched the continuous stream of people arriving from the city. Some six or seven fishing boats had collected offshore, and their crews waded in through the shallow water for a closer look at this enormous storm catch. Later a party of police appeared and made a halfhearted attempt to cordon off the beach, but after walking up to the recumbent figure, any such thoughts left their minds, and they went off together with bemused backward glances.

An hour later there were a thousand people present on the beach, at least two hundred of them standing or sitting on the giant, crowded along his arms and legs or circulating in a ceaseless melee across his chest and stomach. A large gang of youths occupied the head, toppling each other off the cheeks and sliding down the smooth planes of the jaw. Two or three straddled the nose, and another crawled into one of the nostrils, from which he emitted barking noises like a demented

dog.

That afternoon the police returned and cleared a way through the crowd for a party of scientific experts—authorities on gross anatomy and marine biology—from the university. The gang of youths and most of the people on the giant climbed down, leaving behind a few hardy spirits perched on the tips of the toes and on the forehead. The experts strode around the giant, heads nodding in vigorous consultation, preceded by the policemen who pushed back the press of spectators. When they reached the outstretched hand, the experts hastily demurred.

After they returned to the shore, the crowd once more climbed onto the giant, and was in full possession when we left at five o'clock, covering the arms and legs like a dense flock of gulls sitting on the corpse of a large fish.

I next visited the beach three days later. My friends at the library had returned to their work, and delegated to me the task of keeping the giant under observation and preparing a report. Perhaps they sensed my particular interest in the case, and it was certainly true that I was eager to return to the beach. There was nothing necrophilic about this, for to all intents the giant was still alive for me, indeed more alive than many of the people watching him. What I found so fascinating was partly his immense scale, the huge volumes of space occupied by his arms and legs, which seemed to confirm the identity of my own miniature limbs, but above all, the mere categorical fact of his existence. Whatever else in our lives might be open to doubt, the giant, dead or alive, existed in an absolute sense, providing a glimpse into a world of similar absolutes of which we spectators on the beach were such imperfect and puny copies.

When I arrived at the beach the crowd was considerably smaller, and some two or three hundred people sat on the shingle, picnicking and watching the groups of visitors who walked out across the sand. The successive tides had carried the giant nearer the shore, swinging his head and shoulders toward the beach, so that he seemed doubly to gain in size, his huge body dwarfing the fishing boats beached beside his feet. The uneven contours of the beach had pushed his spine into a slight arch, expanding his chest and tilting back the head, forcing him into a more expressly heroic posture. The combined effects of seawater and the tumefaction of the tissues had given the face a sleeker and less youthful look. Although the vast proportions of the features made it impossible to assess the age and character of the giant, on my previous visit his classically modeled mouth and nose suggested that he had been a young man of discreet and modest temper. Now, however, he appeared to be at least in early middle age. The puffy cheeks, thicker nose and temples, and narrowing eyes gave

him a look of well-fed maturity that even now hinted at a growing corruption to come.

This accelerated postmortem development of the giant's character, as if the latent elements of his personality had gained sufficient momentum during his life to discharge themselves in a brief final resume continued to fascinate me. It marked the beginning of the giant's surrender to that all-demanding system of time in which the rest of humanity finds itself, and of which, like the million twisted ripples of a fragmented whirlpool, our finite lives are the concluding products. I took up my position on the shingle directly opposite the giant's head, from where I could see the new arrivals and the children clambering over the legs and arms.

Among the morning's visitors were a number of men in leather jackets and cloth caps, who peered up critically at the giant with a professional eye, pacing out his dimensions and making rough calculations in the sand with spars of driftwood. I assumed them to be from the public works department and other municipal bodies, no doubt wondering how to dispose of this monster.

Several rather more smartly attired individuals, circus proprietors and the like, also appeared on the scene, and strolled slowly around the giant, hands in the pockets of their long overcoats, saying nothing to one another. Evidently its bulk was too great even for their matchless enterprise. After they had gone, the children continued to run up and down the arms and legs, and the youths wrestled with each other over the supine face, the damp sand from their feet covering the white skin.

The following day I deliberately postponed my visit until the late afternoon, and when I arrived there were fewer than fifty or sixty people sitting on the shingle. The giant had been carried still closer to the shore, and was now little more than seventy-five yards away, his feet crushing the palisade of a rotting breakwater. The slope of the firmer sand tilted his body toward the sea, the bruised, swollen face averted in an almost conscious gesture. I sat down on a large metal winch which had been shackled to a concrete caisson above the shingle, and looked down at the recumbent figure.

His blanched skin had now lost its pearly translucence and was spattered with dirty sand which replaced that washed away by the night tide. Clumps of seaweed filled the intervals between the fingers and a collection of litter and cuttlebones lay in the crevices below the hips and knees. But despite this, and the continuous thickening of his features, the giant still retained his magnificent Homeric stature. The enormous breadth of the shoulders, and the huge columns of the arms and legs, still carried the figure into another dimension, and the giant seemed a more authentic image of one of the drowned Argonauts or

heroes of the *Odyssey* than the conventional portrait previously in my mind.

I stepped down onto the sand, and walked between the pools of water toward the giant. Two small boys were sitting in the well of the ear, and at the far end a solitary youth stood perched high on one of the toes, surveying me as I approached. As I had hoped when delaying my visit, no one else paid any attention to me, and the people on the shore remained huddled beneath their coats.

The giant's supine right hand was covered with broken shells and sand, in which a score of footprints were visible. The rounded bulk of the hip towered above me, cutting off all sight of the sea. The sweetly acrid odor I had noticed before was now more pungent, and through the opaque skin I could see the serpentine coils of congealed blood vessels. However repellent it seemed, this ceaseless metamorphosis, a macabre life-in-death, alone permitted me to set foot on the corpse.

Using the jutting thumb as a stair rail, I climbed up onto the palm and began my ascent. The skin was harder than I expected, barely yielding to my weight. Quickly I walked up the sloping forearm and the bulging balloon of the biceps. The face of the drowned giant loomed to my right, the cavernous nostrils and huge flanks of the cheeks like the cone of some freakish volcano. '~\ Safely rounding the shoulder, I stepped out onto the broad promenade of the chest, across which the bony ridges of the rib cage lay like huge rafters. The white skin was dappled by the darkening bruises of countless footprints, in which the patterns of individual heel marks were clearly visible. Someone had built a small sand castle on the center of the sternum, and I climbed onto this partly demolished structure to get a better view of the face.

The two children had now scaled the ear and were pulling themselves into the right orbit, whose blue globe, completely occluded by some milk-colored fluid, gazed sightlessly past their miniature forms. Seen obliquely from below, the face was devoid of all grace and repose, the drawn mouth and raised chin propped up by gigantic slings of muscles resembling the torn prow of a colossal wreck. For the first time I became aware of the extremity of this last physical agony of the giant, no less painful for his unawareness of the collapsing musculature and tissues. The absolute isolation of the ruined figure, cast like an abandoned ship upon the empty shore, almost out of sound of the waves, transformed his face into a mask of exhaustion and helplessness.

As I stepped forward, my foot sank into a trough of soft tissue, and a gust of fetid gas blew through an aperture between the ribs. Retreating from the fouled air, which hung like a cloud over my head, I turned toward the sea to clear my lungs. To my surprise I saw that

the giant's left hand had been amputated.

I stared with shocked bewilderment at the blackening stump, while the solitary youth reclining on his aerial perch a hundred feet away surveyed me with a sanguinary eye.

This was only the first of a sequence of depredations. I spent the following two days in the library, for some reason reluctant to visit the shore, aware that I had probably witnessed the approaching end of a magnificent illusion. When I next crossed the dunes and set foot on the shingle, the giant was little more than twenty yards away, and with this close proximity to the rough pebbles all traces had vanished of the magic which once surrounded his distant wave-washed form. Despite his immense size, the bruises and din that covered his body made him appear merely human in scale, his vast dimensions only increasing his vulnerability.

His right hand and foot had been removed, dragged up the slope, and trundled away by cart. After questioning the small group of people huddled by the breakwater, I gathered that a fertilizer company and a cattlefood manufacturer were responsible.

The giant's remaining foot rose into the air, a steel hawser fixed to the large toe, evidently in preparation for the following day. The surrounding beach had been disturbed by a score of workmen, and deep ruts marked the ground where the hands and foot had been hauled away. A dark brackish fluid leaked from the stumps, and stained the sand and the white cones of the cuttlefish. As I walked down the shingle I noticed that a number of jocular slogans, swastikas, and other signs had been cut into the gray skin, as if the mutilation of this motionless colossus had released a sudden flood of repressed spite. The lobe of one of the ears was pierced by a spear of timber, and a small fire had burned out in the center of the chest, blackening the surrounding skin. The fine wood ash was still being scattered by the wind.

A foul smell enveloped the cadaver, the undisguisable signature of putrefaction, which had at last driven away the usual gathering of youths. I returned to the shingle and climbed up onto the winch. The giant's swollen cheeks had now almost closed his eyes, drawing the lips back in a monumental gape. The once straight Grecian nose had been twisted and flattened, stamped into the ballooning face by countless heels.

When I visited the beach the following day I found, almost with relief, that the head had been removed.

Some weeks elapsed before I made my next journey to the beach, and by then the human likeness I had noticed earlier had vanished again. On close inspection the recumbent thorax and abdomen were unmistakably manlike, but as each of the limbs was chopped off, first

at the knee and elbow, and then at shoulder and thigh, the carcass resembled that of any headless sea animal—whale or whale shark. With this loss of identity, and the few traces of personality that had clung tenuously to the figure, the interest of the spectators expired, and the foreshore was deserted except for an elderly beachcomber and the watchman sitting in the doorway of the contractor's hut.

A loose wooden scaffolding had been erected around the carcass, from which a dozen ladders swung in the wind, and the surrounding sand was littered with coils of rope, long metal-handled knives, and grappling irons, the pebbles oily with blood and pieces of bone and skin.

I nodded to the watchman, who regarded me dourly over his brazier of burning coke. The whole area was pervaded by the pungent smell of huge squares of blubber being simmered in a vat behind the hut.

Both the thighbones had been removed, with the assistance of a small crane draped in the gauzelike fabric which had once covered the waist of the giant, and the open sockets gaped like barn doors. The upper arms, collarbones, and pudenda had likewise been dispatched. What remained of the skin over the thorax and abdomen had been marked out in parallel strips with a tarbrush, and the first five or six sections had been pared away from the midriff, revealing the great arch of the rib cage.

As I left, a flock of gulls wheeled down from the sky and alighted on the beach, picking at the stained sand with ferocious cries.

Several months later, when the news of his arrival had been generally forgotten, various pieces of the body of the dismembered giant began to reappear all over the city. Most of these were bones, which the fertilizer manufacturers had found too difficult to crush, and their massive size, and the huge tendons and disks of cartilage attached to their joints, immediately identified them. For some reason, these disembodied fragments seemed better to convey the essence of the giant's original magnificence than the bloated appendages that had been subsequently amputated. As I looked across the road at the premises of the largest wholesale merchants in the meat market, I recognized the two enormous thighbones on either side of the doorway. They towered over the porters' heads like the threatening megaliths of some primitive druidical religion, and I had a sudden vision of the giant climbing to his knees upon these bare bones and striding away through the streets of the city, picking up the scattered fragments of himself on his return journey to the sea.

A few days later I saw the left humerus lying in the entrance to one of the shipyards. In the same week the mummified right hand was exhibited on a carnival float during the annual pageant of the guilds.

The lower jaw, typically, found its way to the museum of natural history. The remainder of the skull has disappeared, but is probably still lurking in the waste grounds or private gardens of the city—quite recently, while sailing down the river, I noticed two ribs of the giant forming a decorative arch in a waterside garden, possibly confused with the jawbones of a whale. A large square of tanned and tattooed skin, the size of an Indian blanket, forms a back cloth to the dolls and masks in a novelty shop near the amusement park, and I have no doubt that elsewhere in the city, in the hotels or golf clubs, the mummified nose or ears of the giant hang from the wall above a fireplace. As for the immense pizzle, this ends its days in the freak museum of a circus which travels up and down the Northwest. This monumental apparatus, stunning in its proportions and sometime potency, occupies a complete booth to itself. The irony is that it is wrongly identified as that of a whale, and indeed most people, even those who first saw him cast up on the shore after the storm, now remember the giant, if at all, as a large sea beast.

The remainder of the skeleton, stripped of all flesh, still rests on the seashore, the clutter of bleached ribs like the timbers of a derelict ship. The contractor's hut, the crane, and scaffolding have been removed, and the sand being driven into the bay along the coast has buried the pelvis and backbone. In the winter the high curved bones are deserted, battered by the breaking waves, but in the summer they provide an excellent perch for the sea-wearying gulls.

This is the first time I have used two stories by one author (knowingly—but that is another *Annual,* and another author). Not that I have opposed the practice on principle: In fact, if I were to lake my title literally, most of the *Annuals* would be limited to the work of five or six authors; it is a rare, happy year when any more than that can be said to be writing the *best.*

In a given year, I may find anywhere from a handful to a dozen of truly exceptional stories (by perhaps two-thirds as many authors). Beyond that, there may well be four or five times as much good interesting material as I can use.

This collection represents a field of writing: the *field* as well as the writing. Even if there existed some scale of critical absolutes against which a story might be measured for literary merit, I would have little interest in sifting out individual candidates according to decimal-point distinctions of near excellence. I am more concerned with "representativeness."

Who are the new writers? Which magazines are most interesting? What are the new concepts and foci of interest? How do they relate to current work in other fields of writing? To current thinking in science

and philosophy? To world events? S-f is speculative writing, after all, as significant for its statements (and its questions) as for its means of expression.

But only as significant; not more so. S-f is a specialized *way of* writing about ideas. The development of techniques for the expression of new concepts—new modes in language, narrative, and structure—are an essential part of what (ever it is that) we mean by S-F.

All these factors, then, must be considered in weighing the (merely) very good stories against each other—and against the inclusion of two (or more) selections by a single author from the smaller group of outstanding stories. Ordinarily, they operate in favor of variety. This time—

As it happens, Ballard published only one new short story during 1965. *"The Volcano Dances"* appeared originally in Gollancz's 1964 collection. *Terminal Beach*—which I did not see until the fall of 1965. "Giant" was the obvious "qualified" choice—but I could not get "Volcano" out of my mind, once I saw it, and it had never been published here at all, whereas "Giant" *had* been in *Playboy,* and was scheduled for SFWA's *Nebula Awards* anthology as well—for excellent reason; leaving it out of a 1965 "best" collection was simply absurd. It kept going back and forth like that, until the new Ballard stories started appearing in early '66 issues of *Impulse, New Worlds,* and *Ambit.*

This is truly new work for the author as well as the field, it is experimental in style, controversial in content, provocative, evocative, and unforgettable. It establishes Ballard clearly as the significant author in the field today, in *all* the ways I try to consider. In all likelihood, it will also establish him as a storm-center of critical controversy—but that will be small change from last year.

Not everyone *likes* Ballard's work; no one can ignore it, or ignore his impact (as writer and angry critic, both) on other Writers in the field. No serious critical consideration of s-f last year failed to make pointed reference to him (Amis in *Holiday,* Aldiss in *SF Horizons,* Butler in *Spectator,* etc.). His loudly pronounced notions on "inner space" were so widely echoed that he himself stopped using the phrase. He was compared by reviewers to Conrad, Kafka, Bradbury, and Burroughs (William).

It would be as easy, and as inapplicable, to compare him with Camus, or Poe, or Ionesco, or C. S. Lewis. What he has most in common with any of them is best stated in Aldiss' summing up, in a lengthy comparative critique of three British writers: Other *writers . . . are copying. Ballard is originating.*

Certainly, he is s-f's most-published author right now (bar the perennial re-re-re-issues of Asimov, Bradbury, and Clarke).

Doubleday last year reprinted his first two novels. *The Drowned World* and *The Wind from* Nowhere in a combined hardcover edition, at about the same time that the third one. *The Drought,* was published by Jonathan Cape in England, and (as The *Burning World)* in a Berkley paperback here—and the first three chapters appeared in *Ambit, a* highly regarded British literary magazine. Berkley reissued an early collection, and Gollancz reissued their *Terminal Beach* (slightly different in contents from the Berkley edition), while the title story (an obscure, difficult, demanding piece which violated almost every convention of s-f writing) was widely reprinted (including in the *10th Annual)*.

As I write, Ballard's newest novel. *The Crystal World,* is about to appear in both countries (Cape and Farrar), and Berkley has just released a new collection. The *Impossible Man, and other Stories.* Another collection is forthcoming from Cape, and Doubleday is planning the first American hardcover collection.

Meantime, reviews and critical writings by the author have been appearing in *The Guardian* and *Ambit,* as well as in *New Worlds.* Perhaps the best clue to Ballard the writer is to be found in Ballard the critic, who asked impatiently about one book:

. . . one *seriously wonders whether the author has any idea of the real nature of his subject matter. What is the point of this book? Does it have any relevance to anything except itself?*

From the critic too, presumably, came the tearsheets of George MacBeth's poem, which I would otherwise never have seen.

* * * *

CIRCE UNDERSEA OR A CRY FROM THE DEPTHS

N.B. This tape found floating in an antimagnetic metal capsule by the first Venusian astronauts, 2020 A.D., was forwarded from the future to us by:

GEORGE MACBETH

The enchantress leafs through her Victorian bible in the log-room of her submarine, musing over its Apocalyptic bookplates

I cry to thee from *Jonah*, Lord. And there
The eyes of Christ, engraved "from Holman Hunt"
By Swan Electric, reverently glare
At my pet seal. And here, in *John*, stand front

To front in Coats of Arms, with copper names,
Adam and Eve, his phoenix, her dark Cross,
Between whose bars that strange bird's bill enflames
Papery ether to a blazing *schloss*

In whose far glow Eve's angels, Adam's quails,
Per fidem tuti, and in sight of Tyre
An inch or two from Sodom, tangling tails,
Arch and are one. And thy consuming fire

Hath charred their trees a little, marked their Fate,
And signed with ash their feathers and their plate

Ere Yale was burned. And I have bowed myself

Into my log-room and thy flooded Earth

She deplores the slowness with which she must dictate her sonnets to weave a spell over the deity she calls "Lord"

And, stretched with sword-fish by the Scripture Shelf,
Yawned through these volumes on the virgin birth

Of Christ and Eve. Have poised for thee, my Lord,
One periscope, through which, well-filled with cream
Of urchin soup, thou mayest snoop, when bored,
And spy thy Captain Circe, in her dream,

Wave a bead wand, and resurrect from rust,
Far from the Keys of Florida, shed leaves
Of magic books to blossom in her dust
And branch within her sonnets. How one grieves

At such poor speed! Speed, Pegasus of tape,
I ape thy wings. Lord, pray avert that shape

Of doom I see sail past my seaward wall
And spread wide jaws for jew-fish in the green

She reflects on sea-beasts she has seen through the port-hole of her cabin, beside which hang two seascapes by Winslow Homer (1836-1910)

And vivid eye of Homer. His *Black Yawl*
Off Cape St. Vincent (from the *Club Marine*)

Pairs, by the port-hole's blue, *The Bluebird's Wing,*
And is my joy. I watched two whales, once, rise

And consummate their love here in a ring
Of blood-flecked opal. And, in amber, flies,

Immured by queens of Argos used to grip
And waver in the Autumn sea of art
According to Odysseus, who would strip
And glut his own lust with an Argive tart

(The older Homer says) in halls of bronze
And gorge on vistas of his mistress' *mons*

And so should know. Lord, we are all whales. Thrum
Some dulcet air that I may conjugate
She sadly reflects on the violent sexual habits of modern times and envisages her own poem providing a soothing balm
In sea-green sheets I conjure from my rum
And scent with ambergris. Must steamships grate

And shudder where our school once paved the Sound
With fat and oil? Poor waves. It so affronts
To love the moonlight, and still lap the ground,
Where Ahab vanished, and Odysseus grunts,

And Circe wavers. I will fish for cod
With gothic and electric nets that thrill
And quiver in my Grundig's body, God,
And, feeding birds, faint mariner, will fill

This wandering albatross, that flightless rail,
Sunk in its moving spool, with bones for sail

And land to fly for. In each air-fed hold
I mark the tidy pens, and move glazed walls,
She sees in her mind's eye the stalls in her submarine ark where the sick beasts are penned, and she remembers the original conception of her voyage
And watch (once lion-grasped or leopard-scrolled)
Orbs of each mythic beast, now shrunk to balls,

Roll at their stone of sea, their pearl of view.
O Trumpeter of Wrath, wert thou afraid
When Christ was at Charybdis! When thy crew
Craved for a sty, didst thou foretell the raid

With thy grey sirens? Crucified from books,
I wed thy early warning, built from wrecks
My twin-track fly-trap with a brace of crooks
And launched my nautilus on spools of Sex
Against the rain. If Armageddon moves
Through my sad house, and thy Four Horses' hooves

Not winged like Mercury, but slow and blind
Plod through the press, and print more blood in wars,

She begins to see that the God to whom she is addressing herself is a God of War using her as his instrument of destruction

Am I to blame? O God of Rockets, lined
With fire and genesis, whose farthest shores

I never plumbed, thy breeding-ground was Rome
And its arenas. Even these Greek rhymes
Grope like the Devil-fish. Each gospel tome
I balance by my astrolabe at times

Gleams like a Man O' War, goes floating wild
For pork and alms. Why, who would doubt the crew
Is charmed by *thy* dread sorcery? Enisled
Off Java, with my submarine a zoo,

And ash in all the China skies, how long
Before thy thunders falter, and my thong

Across lax hides emits on Ararat
In Ithaca or Chile men in pairs
Afraid to crop the lush grass, grossly fat
From indoor exercise, too pale from airs

Realising that even her poem may be enchanted by this God of War, she lays aside all pretence of spell-weaving and kneels in prayer

Of pumps, and worried by the wind and sun?
I wonder, as I spoon my gruel, cut
To four drams for my sins, and watch light run
To jag my glass, and hear thy disc-locks shut

Throughout the ship. If I rehearse this reel
I fear these words will drivel out in high
Dry honks as do my bell-bird's. Let me kneel
And pray to thee. Shall my dove ever fly

Above cold waves, and come at last to land,
And find, not air's cooled ash, but sea's warmed sand?

The note about George MacBeth from the editor of Ambit said in

hasty script: . . . like many Scots, has lived most of his life in England. He is a BBC producer for the Third Programme . . . Much of his poetry is about the violence associated with fascism. He also has a major interest in experimental writing, and has written one poem in the form of a card game and another in the form of an encyclopedia. He is tall, dresses very correctly in dark-blue English suits with white collar. Sports a small ginger mustache, likes cats and women, etc.

Almost on the heels of that note came another, telling me MacBeth was on his way to the States. (Turned out he was here on a cultural-exchange thing, on the invitation of the Council on Leaders and Specialists of the Experiment in International Living: State Dept.)

We had a fast-talking lunch, and I acquired some further vital statistics. He was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, in 1932; is married to a geneticist. Two volumes of his own poetry in print: The Broken Places and The Doomsday Book (Scorpion Press, London, 1963 and 1965). Also edited two anthologies for Penguin: Sick Verse (1963) and Animal Verse (1965). In 1964, he wrote, produced, financed, and acted in [I transcribe here from table-napkin notes] "The Doomsday Show"—-a post-nuclear poetry cabaret show at the Establishment Club in London—See poetry and s-f as sharing a common imagination—Admire "calamity fiction" of John Christopher (particularly The Death of Grass) and see Jules Verne as one of the greatest of Victorian writers—Think poetry can take over the plots and imagery of s-f and give it new emotional depth—and it can offer new techniques (e.g. Ballard's short-paragraph, cut-up sequence pieces which go back ultimately to the American poet Brion Gysin, who influenced Burroughs)—Best s-f poet so far is the English writer D. M. Thomas, author of (as yet on published) Launching Pad.

I understand a copy of launching Pad is on its way to me; in return, some recommendations for Mr. MacBeth—high grade "calamity fiction" from last year's New Worlds: Charles Platt's "Lone Zone," James Colvin's "The Mountain," and Colin R. Fry's "The Night of the Gyul." And Gerald Kersh, coming up—

* * * *

SOMEWHERE NOT FAR FROM HERE
GERALD KERSH

When i say that where I come from is neither here nor there, I mean exactly that, for my family's place is dust and ashes. And there are thirty-two winds. As the Dumb Ox once said, "Neither here nor there is everywhere. You are a citizen of the world, young Martin. Cheer up!"

I have nothing but my name, Martin, and I do not rate. I never had a woman. My ambition was to grow a mustache. I never shall. In another month I should be fifteen years old, but that month is not for me. Tomorrow or the day after even my name will be lost. Why should anybody remember me?

Perhaps one of my friends will manage to live until there is peace and quiet. I have never known such a time. But it may come, and somebody might say, "Those, children, were the days when we learned to throw a bomb as you learn to throw a ball. The boy Martin was there at that time, and he played the man among us men . . ."

It may be. I hope so. You are, actually, only as you are remembered. I did my best and I fought with the rest. I have to go now where most of my friends must be. But who will recognize poor Martin in the dark?

That night I was with the guerrillas—I was one of the free men—and Mike was leading us; a good man. There were thirty of us with him that night. We had to raid an enemy dump for dynamite, fuses, detonators. When we went through the woods the rain beat on the leaves so that nobody could hear us. It was late when we got out of the trees and crawled up the slope. Mike cut the wire and stabbed a sentry in the throat with a broad-bladed butcher's knife. Do this right and a man's lungs fill up with blood. He dies with nothing more than a cough.

The sentry's number two came by, and the Dumb Ox killed him with a handkerchief. It is an old trick. You tie something heavy into the corner of your piece of cloth and swing it backhand about your man's neck; catch the swung end and get your knuckles into the base of his skull. I have done it myself. The principle is that if you use a noose, even of thin wire, it must go over the other man's head and he, being on the alert, will see that wire pass his eyes, and turn or duck. The Ox weighed three hundred pounds. The sentry died in silence. So we crept through the gap.

Mike had figured that with any kind of luck fifteen of the thirty of

us might get away. “It could be a lot worse,” he said. So it could. But now the enemy seemed to be fast asleep. We were quiet, God knows; we knew how to be quiet because we had been living like worms underground. But within only a little distance of the dump somebody sensed us. He could not have seen us. He could not have heard us. Whatever it was, he let loose a burst of machine gun fire in our general direction.

At a sign we lay still. Nobody knew where we were, or whether we were ten or a thousand strong, until they fired a flare, a white flare, which went off in the sky with a shaky light. Under that light we must have been as easy to see as cutout silhouettes. A violet flare went up then and—believe me!—it was a dream, every man with half-a-dozen shadows, all dancing, as Mike threw out his hand in the sign that means *Forward.* Then we charged, muddy-bellied as wild pigs, every one of us with his machine pistol and his grenades.

You would have thought that all the guns in the world had gone off at once. As the white flare died, another went up; only some fool of an enemy fired a green one. Shooting at shadows? So they were; only they filled the air with lead in a double enfilade. Mike went forward all the time and I was the first behind him. I said it was like a dream. But it was not a bad dream. Everything was so quick and bright, you wanted it not to end. And if this is child’s talk, let it be.

We cut our way into the dump. Mike threw me a case of dynamite. The Ox took it from me and put it under his arm. He was as calm as if all this had been arranged in an office. Pulling the pins with his teeth, he threw four grenades. A machine gun stopped suddenly and I heard a man screaming, “Mother! Mother!”

Mike gave me four tins of fuses and two of detonators which I could get inside my jacket. Then he caught hold of another box of those round bombs you can crack a tank with, and we ran.

I was at his elbow. All of a sudden he went down on one knee. When I saw him fall I stood over him. He was wounded, horribly wounded, split open; a terrible sight to see. What kind of strength is it that is put into a man? Torn to pieces, how does he still go on? The rain was a kind of curtain. The next flare made a double rainbow. “Back to the bridge!” Mike said. I hesitated: I was bound to obey, but it was my duty to die with him. Then he ran— not back to where we had come from, but straight into the enemy dump. He was hit a dozen times. My head was cut by a bullet, which knocked me down but brought me to my senses. I remembered that I was carrying detonators and fuses.

So I caught up with the few who were left of us at the foot of the slope. You may say without lying that young Martin was the last out.

I was blind with blood. A green flare and a white one went off,

and it was just as if the night had turned to lead. Then something cracked. I recognized the thundery noise of dynamite and the snapping of Mike's box of bombs. He had got to some of the heavy stuff, because after that the dump burst in a red and white flash. A long time later (as it seemed) there was a burning wind which sucked the breath out of our bodies, and a shower of branches, leaves and bits of metal; and the rain was mud and blood.

This is the way Mike died.

We caught our breath. There were only nine of us left now, and one of us wounded—the best of us all. His name was John. The Ox said to him, "Well, friend, you've got it good. One of you lend a hand with this box of stuff. Don't take it to heart, John—I can carry you twenty miles."

So he could have. At first sight you might have thought the Ox to be nothing but a silly-faced fat man, as broad as he was tall. You would never have made a bigger mistake in your life. He was the strongest man any of us ever saw, and he seemed to be made of a sort of tough, resilient rubber. Heavy as he was, he could move like a cat. It was impossible to tire him or wear him out. I have seen him fell a tree with a double-bitted ax, using only his left hand. His last stroke was as powerful as his first. It seemed to me there was no weight the Ox could not move. He picked John up as easily as a woman picks up a baby, and in much the same way, although John was not a little man. He kept saying, "Leave me, leave me," but the Ox took no notice of this, but cradled him in his enormous arms and carried him ahead swiftly but ever so gently. I heard him say, "Leave him, he says! Christ Jesus, for all I know we might be the last free men left in the world!"

So we might have been. There was no way of knowing otherwise.

That great downpour of rain which had curtained us when we came out had stopped. It was not going to cover our, retreat. The night was clearing and there was a little new moon no bigger than a clipping from your thumbnail. After that awful bang with which Mike went out of the world, everything seemed strange and quiet, almost peaceful. You felt that your troubles were over. It was peace, as I have heard old men talk of it. In a few minutes I would find myself walking home.

But when I saw John gritting his teeth in his pain, I knew there was no such thing as home, and peace was an old man's story. It did not take much to remind me of ashes and dust and the thirty-two winds.

* * * *

I was in the forest when the enemy came through our place. When I came back there was nothing but dirt and darkness where the village had been. The enemy were punishing us for something somebody had done—I don't know who and I don't know what. My family had lived there a long time. Where our little house had been there was only half a wall, smoldering. Among the burnt stuff I recognized part of the table we had eaten at all our lives. We were clean people. The table had been scrubbed and scoured until the soft parts of the grain were worn away and there was a pattern in the wood I could have recognized anywhere, blindfold, just by feeling it. They left the bodies unburied. I buried my father and mother, first covering my mother with my shirt, she being stripped naked. I put my brother between them. They had picked him up by the heels and beaten his brains out against the floor. He was three years old.

Yes, there was plenty to remember.

I said, "Ox, I've got fuses and detonators under my jacket. I would have stayed with Mike if it hadn't been for that, honest to God!"

He said, "Keep the stuff dry, then. This is no time for heroics. For all I know we are the last of the free men."

This made me feel better. I said, "Mike ran into that dump with a dozen bullets in him."

The Ox said, "He might have done worse. He might have run away from the dump with a dozen bullets in him."

Mike's brother Thomas spat and said, "Shut up, you goddamn Ox."

He was a strong man too, and a brave man, but he would never make a leader. This, as I once heard John say, was because he did not know how to take an order. He liked to argue. Leaders don't argue. He could give a command, but if he did so, you had the feeling that he didn't really expect to be obeyed. With Mike an order was a law; where he went, you followed.

Thomas was a good man, though. So were they all; everyone had been through fire and water and knew what it was to bed down in hell. John used to say that all the best men have been to hell. As the storm proves the boat, trouble proves the man, he would say.

John was a man. He was thirty years old, well educated; a man without fear, and in battle a wildcat. When John spoke, even Mike listened. The enemy captured him once and (being short of guards) broke his leg with an iron bar so that he could not run away. They tortured him for weeks. He let them concentrate on his fingernails and all that while the bone knitted. All the time he never spoke. One dark night he crawled away and escaped.

He had suffered his share—yes, indeed—and now he was dying. He said, "Ox, Ox, put me down. I am leaving a trail of blood for

anybody to follow."

We had reached a little clearing in the forest, so disguised with brush that it would take a woodsman to find it. At that, a woodsman who knew that particular part of the woods. The Ox sighed. He felt the life going out of John. He set him down on a bed of moss so that his back was supported by a tree, and said, "Better let me ease that belt a bit."

"Take it off, Ox, and keep it. Keep the knife, too. It is a good bit of steel. Keep it. I won't need it now."

The Ox took the belt and the knife in silence. Then John looked at me and took out a little leather book, and gave it to me. He said, "For you, Martin." I took it. It was, I think, some book of poetry, but it was all gummed together with blood. I said, "I will learn to read."

He smiled at this. "Now go on and leave me, friends. I am a dead man. The dead weigh heavy. Go."

We said nothing. Then the Ox said one word, "No!"

We stared at him. Nobody ever heard his voice sound like that, hard as iron. He said, "While there's life there's hope. I carry you as long as you breathe. The free men don't leave their kind to die."

Thomas said, "Hold it, Ox. I assume command, Mike being dead."

"By all means," the Ox said, "you are general officer in command, you are anything you like. Command. First of all, though, let me tell you what we've got to do."

He had the case of dynamite open and was handing out the sticks in bundles. "First and foremost we've got to get as much of this stuff home as we can, so we divide it equally and each carry a few pounds. Fuses and detonators —they're precious. Divide them up likewise. Stow the stuff away and we'll get going. Once we get across the footbridge we're all right. But by now the enemy is over its little shock and after us in force. Let's go."

"I'm in command here," said Thomas.

"Sure, sure." The Ox lifted John up again. He climbed out of the hollow, light and fast, and we all followed him as if we had been in the habit of doing so all our lives. Then we were deep in the woods again. We followed him because we could see that he knew exactly what he wanted to do. Although he moved so fast, I think that if John had been a bowl filled with water to the brim he would not have spilled a drop, he carried him so gently and steadily.

He reached the stream ahead of us. There he stopped dead. I knew that something bad had happened. Catching up with him, I saw that where we had left a swift but shallow brook the day before, there was a rushing torrent. There must have been a great cloudburst high up in the hills.

We were at the narrowest part where the little wooden bridge

was. Only now there was no bridge. The flood had torn it down and tossed it away.

Between us and the other side lay twenty feet of foaming water driven by a current strong enough to whisk you away like a twig. Only a few of the piles of the bridge were standing a foot or so above the surface.

This was bad. Then, as we looked at one another, a little boy came running. He was too young for fighting, but he carried messages. He shouted above the noise of the water, "The enemy is coming. A strong force. Hide yourselves. They are no more than three miles away." Then he was gone.

Thomas said, "We must scatter and hide."

The Ox said, "Got to get this stuff across the water, friend."

"But there's no bridge!"

"Then we must build one," said the Ox.

We looked at him. We thought he had gone crazy. He said, "The enemy can't get through three miles of these woods in under an hour."

I said, not knowing what I was saying, "That's right, we must build one."

Something in my heart told me that if the Ox said we had to build a bridge, he knew how to do it, and I was ready to follow him. He winked at me.

Just then I saw two people appear on the opposite bank, an old man and a girl.

We all knew them well. The old man was the girl's grandfather, and his name was Martin, the same as mine— Grandpa Martin. He had been a farmer, once, but had lost everything. Now he was one of us. He lost his farm, he lost his son, worst of all, he lost his granddaughter Beatrice. She was about fourteen, and the prettiest girl for miles around, blue-eyed and with chestnut hair, when the enemy carried her off. I am not ashamed to say that I was in love with her, the way little boys are—I being only eleven at that time. Everybody loved Bea, as she was called. But she had no eyes for anybody except John. The men laughed at her for this, in a good-natured way. Once, when he was out on a raid, I heard her saying under her breath, "Let him be wounded—but not badly—and then perhaps he will let me nurse him." For John never looked at her; for all he cared, she might have been a thousand miles away.

The Ox said of her, "She is a well-developed girl. In the old days she would marry well and have ten strong sons."

"You are an Ox," Thomas told him. He, too, had a weakness for old Martin's granddaughter.

But the enemy was short of pretty girls. They made her one of their women, kept her in a tent. By one means and another she got all

kinds of useful information out to the free men of the woods. She had learned the Patheran, the sign writing with twigs, stones and movements of the fingers that the tramps and the gypsies used in olden times. We got her out after two years. It cost us four good men. She was worth it. But she was no longer the same Beatrice. Tall, yes, and with a shape to take your breath away. But her voice was hoarse and her eyes hard.

She said to Mike, “Let nobody touch me. Let nobody drink out of my cup or use my spoon. I am sick. And where you boys have killed your hundreds, in one month I have killed three hundred generations of the enemy—them, their wives, their sweethearts and their children. Understand?”

Thomas said, “We have no doctor and no drugs. Can’t we perhaps snatch one of their doctors with his black bag?”

She laughed and said, “They haven’t any drugs either, much. As for their medical officer, I fancy he will be wondering how to cure himself.”

Still, seeing her on the other side of the water, I felt strong as three men, and I shouted to the Ox, “What are we waiting for?”

Thomas said, “Talk is cheap, Ox. The enemy will be here in an hour. I vote we scatter and hide.”

The Ox said, “They know we’ll have come here. There wasn’t any other place we could come to. The woods are too thin hereabout. We’ve got to get across.”

Big Steve said, “Ambush ‘em—fight it out!”

The Ox said, “And the dynamite, the detonators, the fuses? I am going to blow up the transportation bridge.”

All the time his eyes were darting here and there. He was getting everything into one simple picture in his mind—the river, the distance, the piles, the trees and the scattered timbers of the old footbridge on the bank. The clouds were gathering. More heavy weather would break again soon.

“Axes,” the Ox said. “Axes and machetes.” We each carried one or the other. “And rope, rope!” Every one of us had a length of strong cord tied around his waist— generally, that is. But on this fast raid most of us had traveled light. Among us we had no more than thirty feet or so of tough cord.

“Now,” the Ox said, “we want a few long light logs. Martin, take my ax. There’s something I’ve got to do.”

He picked up John and carried him up the bank. There he put him down again. It took only a second. Then he ran back, snatched away Big Steve’s automatic rifle and took it to John, and said, “Have you strength enough left to watch the woods?”

“Yes.”

But John was dying, his back against a tree and his knees bent up to support his wounded body. His eyes were in black hollows, as if they had burnt their way in.

Then I forgot about him. There was wood on the bank. I picked out a young spruce that the water had carried down from the mountain. The ax was a good one. I took off the top of the tree, and it cut like cheese. Then the lower part above the roots. I may be young, but I was bred hard. Still, when I tried to lift the trunk it was too heavy for me, although I was working the way some men pray. But then the Ox was with me. He picked up the log all alone and carried it to where one of the piles of the bridge stuck out of the mud on the bank.

"The water is rising," Steve said.

Thomas said, "And the enemy is coming."

The Ox simply said, "Oh, shut up!"

I wish he were here to tell you what happened then. I know, I saw; but I was working with all my heart and soul. A man is made to work only at one thing at a time. The only people who look left and right are those who weren't there. John told me once that all the world loves a bridge. In ancient times "Bridge-builder" was one of the highest titles the Romans could offer a man. He told me that there have been steel bridges that spanned oceans. But I shall always believe that the most wonderful bridge ever built or even attempted was the bridge we started to build across that flooding stream with a few bits of line and some fallen trees, with less than an hour to spare and the enemy on our heels.

The Dumb Ox said to me, once, "Actually, son, my name is Clem, but I don't mind if you call me Ox."

"I suppose they call you that because you are strong and patient," I said.

"And dumb, and slow. Also, because I am always chewing on a bit of grass or a straw. I can't see the things smart people see. I'm not sensitive—a goad in the ass is about as much as I can feel. I am brainless. I know what is right and I know what is wrong, but the whys and the wherefores are not for my thick skull."

And so it seemed until there was this problem. The cleverest among us couldn't foresee a cloudburst up on the mountain. But it had happened, and nobody knew what to do about it except the Ox. Later, when there was time to talk, he said to me, "Well, we *had* to get across and keep the stuff dry. What must be done must be done, with whatever comes to hand. If you have years of time and millions of money and thousands of workmen, build with steel and concrete, and good luck to you. If you have only got a bit of rope, a few sticks and sixty minutes—do what you can with them, boy, and be thankful.

There is always a way to deal with things. Despair is for the enemy. To hope on and manage yourself, that is to be one of the free men."

He seemed to have room for only one thought in his head at a time. Now it was to find a way across the water before the enemy came up. "It was all very well for Thomas to say scatter and hide," the Ox said. But, as he pointed out, there was no place to hide. Downstream were the rapids, gone wild in the flood. Upstream, water that was dangerous even on a quiet day. We had counted on going back the way we had come. But there was no more footbridge. "To stay and fight it out would have been all very well," the Ox said; we might have killed a few dozen of the enemy and then died ourselves. But we had a responsibility. Dead men carry no fuses. "The enemy would have started out with a rush," the Ox said, "but they couldn't know our woods the way we do, with all their maps and their spies. We could move fast over the trail we took. They would go slower and slower, suspecting an ambush ..."

He stood there scratching his head and looking about him like a workman who is being paid by the hour. "Ambush, ambush," he said, and went up the bank again to where John was watching the woods. What he did there was like this: He tied two machine pistols to two trees about thirty yards apart. He fastened a length of twine to the trigger of each, and lashed the loose ends to John's elbows, saying, all in a breath, "If you see or hear them, John, bring your elbows together. Those guns are cocked. There will be a burst in their direction from two sides."

John whispered, "And hit what?"

The Ox said, "Nobody. But they'll think the woods are full of us on two sides. When they come forward, you use your own gun."

"Yes," John said.

Then the Ox came running and showed us what we had to do. First of all we had to make fast a log to the pile at our bank. This had to be done quickly, because the pile would be under water any minute now. This log had to lie from the pile on the bank to the first pile in the stream; one of us had to crawl out and lash it down. The man who lashed down the end of the first log to the second pile would have to stand there, balancing himself like a tightrope walker and catch one end of a second tree trunk. Holding this, he would have to drag it toward him so that the farther end of the log rested on the second pile in the stream.

There is a game we used to play with tiny slivers of wood—spilikins. You pick your spilikins one by one out of a jumbled pile. Make one false move and you lost the game. Now we were playing with logs, and the game was a matter of life and death.

Let me make it clear. Here is twenty feet of white water. You

must lay three tree trunks across it, supporting them on balks of rotten wood, one on each bank, sticking out of the mud, and two in mid-current. At any moment there will come a wind strong enough to blow you off the earth and a downpour of rain to swell the stream. You have three-quarters of an hour, a bit of rope, and nobody to work with you on the other side but an old cripple and a girl.

As the Ox said later, "Actually, you know, you can take an interest in a problem like that. Thank God I am an odd-jobman! . . . Make no hero of me, my boy. There is nothing heroic in doing a job in an emergency."

I said, "Ah, but what if you hadn't?"

He said, "I should have been a bungler, don't you see, a failure. I won't be made a hero of. I don't believe in heroes —I've met too many of them. You must do what you can as well as you can. That's your duty as a free man. Son, there is only black or white—meaning, there is only one alternative to bravery, and that is cowardice. If you do less than your utmost you are a coward. You must put into your work all God gave you. The only alternative to crossing the water would have been to stay on the wrong side of it. Which would have been wrong."

I said, "Clem, you gave us the strength to do it."

"No. You made yourselves strong. You know how you can reach into yourself and take yourself in both hands and squeeze the water out of yourself until you are nice and firm. That is what we did, kid, because we had to."

"And now it seems impossible," I said.

Clem the Ox answered, "From the impossible to the impossible—that is the road of us free men."

Now the first thing we had to do was lay the tree I had trimmed so that its narrow end overlapped the first pile in midstream by about a foot.

This seemed simple enough in itself.

We tied a rope around the thin end and stood the log up on its butt, which we jammed hard against the pile on our side of the bank.

Four of us held the rope, keeping the log upright. Clem guided the log with his hands, saying, "Easy does it... Good . . . Good, lower away."

But then, just as the end of the log touched the other pile, there was a gust of wind and a shrieking of the water. The bank was slippery clay. One of us slid down, caught off balance by the wind, and caught at the rope to save himself.

The far end of the log to which the rope was tied fell off the pile. The current caught the free end. The log and rope were like a tremendous whip with all of us clinging with might and main to the lash. The log spun. We felt ourselves going, and let go. As the water

tore the log away, Clem the Ox caught the end of the rope. He braced himself. The force of that jolt as the tree trunk tried to get away drove him into the clay almost to his knees.

I took my place behind him, gripped him about the waist and held on. The rest took the rope and hauled. We played the log, and we landed it.

Clem, pursing up his lips, said, “All right. Once again.”

Thomas said, “This is madness.”

“All together, now,” said the Ox.

We tried again. This time the thin end of the log fell obediently into position. I said, “Now it wants lashing down. I am the lightest weight here. I can walk a log and make a fast knot.”

Clem said, “Good. But hold tight to the rope as you go.” He had the loose end wound about his fist. I balanced myself and walked out. Once I slipped, but recovered myself. I lashed the log fast. A third part of the bridge was built; but a third part of our time was gone, and the water was swelling, and on the other side Grandpa Martin and Beatrice were in trouble.

They, weak as they were, were trying to do from their side what we were doing from ours. The old man was a strange one. Since he had lost his land he had been like the walking dead. Now he looked almost young again, plastered with mud from head to foot like Adam when God made him out of red clay. His log was trimmed, and he had cut notches in it so that the rope would not slip. I saw him yelling, but could not hear him. A knuckle of rock had made a kind of breakwater where he and Beatrice were, so that the water was shallower and the current less dangerous on their side. A special strength seemed to pour into them. She took the thin end. And he the middle. Inch by inch they urged it forward. As luck would have it, they got the log to rest upon their two piles. True, there were some great iron spikes left sticking out to help them there. Still, it was a thing to wonder at. But they had not enough rope. “Your belt! Your belt!” Grandpa Martin shouted; and she unbuckled her belt and strapped it tight where the logs met.

Clem called to me in his great lowing voice, “Stay where you are and lend a hand”—for he had another log prepared, long enough to reach from the second pile to the third and so link everything together.

Clem sat down upon the log we had already laid, straddling it with his legs; using his hands he climbed a little way out. Halfway along he made a sign. The others pushed out the new log. He gripped it tightly and slid it toward me. I dragged it in my direction, caught the end, steadied it, and pushed it toward Beatrice. She and the old man got it into place.

I went back to join Clem and the others.

Then something heartbreaking happened: A rotten old miserable weeping willow tree came drifting down. It touched a swirl in the current so that the water closed about it like a hand, swung it like a club—a very heavy club, slow to lift, quick to drop—and struck the second log at the thin end. So the middle span of our bridge snapped like a match, and the two pieces of it went bobbing away with the willow.

From the distance came a popping of shots. I looked from face to face. Now the strength was going out of us. Our last hope had gone with that log, it seemed. We all looked at Clem. Thomas said—and he sounded almost cheerful, "So it's to be scatter and *sauve qui peut."*

Clem's face set like stone. He said, "Easy does it. I don't scatter. Somebody give me an ax."

He wanted another tree. The tree nearest to the bank was nearly two feet thick. Clem went for it at hip level. I ran to help him, but he ordered me back. We knew why. He had won prizes felling timber in contests, using a double-headed ax in competition with champions. In less time than it takes me to tell you this, the tree was down. He had dropped it just where he wanted it to lie. Then he and the rest of us were on that fallen tree like madmen, taking off the top branches.

"She's too heavy," Thomas said, panting for breath, "those other two logs will be off the piles any moment. And we are out of rope-"

Some stray bullets were whistling high overhead now. Clem said, "So take off your belts, take off your pants . . ." He seemed to change all in a second. I have never seen such a face or heard such a voice as he said, "What? Be beat by this puddle?" We were more afraid of him at that moment than of any kind of death or disaster. He screamed like a horse in a fire. His eyes were red. He lifted the heavy end of the tree in his bare hands, alone. The seams of his leather jacket burst. Black veins swelled in his neck and arms. It was as much as the rest of us could do, working together, to lift the lighter end of the tree.

Then Clem, his legs wide apart, walked backward into the water. He said, later, that it was only the great weight he was carrying that anchored him against the current while his feet found firm places to stand upon. He was in the stream up to his waist. Then the water was up to his chin. His knees bent. The water was over his head. He was putting all he had—much more than he had dreamed he ever had—into one last awful effort. His legs straightened and he held the log above his head for just a second. Then the butt end of it was on the third pile, our end was in place, and Clem was back among us with blood running from his nose and mouth.

He told me later, "I put into one minute the strength of five years of life."

Now Beatrice was across. She had lost her boots and her trousers. “Where is John?” she asked.

Clem gave her a parcel of fuses and detonators and said, “Take these across.”

“But John?”

“Take these across.”

She nodded, took the parcel and stepped on the first log. She walked like somebody in a dream; crossed the middle log and then the third. She was over.

Then Clem gave me a parcel and told me to go. I went. One by one the others followed. The firing was close now. I heard John’s fixed machine pistols firing wildly into the bushes. Then his own weapon, in little careful bursts. There were four or five wet thuds as some grenades exploded. Clem stood, wiping his bloody mouth on the back of his hand. I saw him sigh. Then he crossed our poor little bridge and was with us, just as the enemy appeared on the bank we had just left. It was broad daylight now.

We opened fire. Only Clem the Ox did not take cover. He took out the knife John had given him and stooped, and slashed at the cord holding the log the girl and the old man had got into position. It rolled away as the water pushed and sucked at it. With it went the other two logs. They seemed to wave us goodbye and danced away. I think I know what was in his heart just then. Fastening those three sticks together was great work.

Beatrice said to me, “John is dead?”

I said, “Yes, but he thought of you, and he told me to give you this.” I took from round my neck where I had hung it the little bloodstained book with the bullet hole, and although it was the most precious thing I had—or because it was—I gave it to her. And although the free people never lie except to the enemy, I said, “He sent it to you with love.”

She said, taking the book, “And this is his blood?”

“That hole is where the bullet went through. He had only two things, his knife and that book. He gave Clem his knife, but, the book is for Beatrice with my love.’”

She asked, “And nothing for you, Martin?”

“He smiled at me,” was all I could say.

Then I had to turn away. Clem, who had sharp ears and had heard what I said, patted my shoulder with his torn right hand and said, “Well done, kid. Spoken like a free man!” Then he unbuckled John’s knife and gave it to me, saying, “This is for you. I’ve got a knife of my own.”

Thomas said, “Well, let’s get going.”

“Quite right,” said Clem, “you’re in command.”

So we got the fuses and stuff to wreck Bridge K16. There five of us died and I got the wound I am going to die of pretty soon. This is the end of *my* story.

I mentioned earlier the prevalence of war-theme stories: war-and-diplomacy-and-sovereignty stories, that is, as distinct from calamity stories. There were four at least besides the several included here that are worth special mention: Jesse Bier's "Father and Son" from a book full of remarkable stories, *A Hole in the Lead Apron* (Harcourt Brace & World); Joseph Green's "The Decision Makers" (Galaxy); Mack Reynolds' "Time of War" (*If*); and William Sambrot's "Substance of Martyrs" (Rogue).

Meanwhile, back in the laboratory, the world of science has not forgotten about war problems either. One of the news items emanating from the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Berkeley last year concerned investigations into "a strange drug" which might prevent the lethal effects of shock.

What made me notice the piece particularly was the headline: PRE-COMBAT INJECTIONS MAY BAR FATAL SHOCK. Sort of mode me wonder whether it was the boys in the back room at the newspaper, or at the lab, who forgot that civilians die of shock too.

What makes me mention it now is Roald Dahl's story. This one is a calamity story, and if you happen to have any adrenochrome *semicarbazone* around, I suggest you lake a pre-reading injection.

* * * *

IN THE RUINS
ROALD DAHL

Somewhere among the bricks and stones, I came across a man sitting on the ground in his underpants, sawing off his left leg. There was a black bag beside him, and the bag was open, and I could see a hypodermic needle lying there among all the rest of the stuff.

"Do you want some?" he asked, looking up.

"Yes, please," I said. I was going crazy with hunger.

"I don't mind giving you a bit so long as you will promise to produce the next meal. I am quite uncontaminated."

"All right," I said. "Yes."

"Caudal injection," he said. "Base of the spine. You don't feel a thing."

I found a few bits of wood, and I made a fire in the ruins, and started roasting a piece of the meat. The doctor sat on the ground doing things to the stump of his leg.

A child came up, a girl of about four years old. She had probably seen the smoke from the fire or smelled the smell of cooking, I don't know which. She was very unsteady on her feet.

"Do you want some, too?" the doctor asked.

She nodded.

"You'll have to pay it back later," the doctor said.

The child stood there looking at the piece of meat that I was holding over the fire on the end of a bent curtain rod.

"You know something," the doctor said, "with all three of us here, we ought to be able to survive for quite a long time."

"I want my mummy," the child said, starting to cry.

"Sit down," the doctor told her. "I'll take care of you."

Well, I warned you.

The next story is also a war story, but a very different war, in a radically different time—and Time is the key word, not just for "Traveller's Rest," but for a good deal of the s-f you will be reading in the next few years. I am not talking about time-travel, or time-paradox, or parallel-universes-in-time,- these are tried and true devices of s-f, used to establish a sufficiently remote, yet credible, cultural context. The stories I am talking about are not manipulating time in order to look at some other aspect of human experience— they are trying to look at the nature of Time itself, or at least at the nature of the human experience of the phenomenon we call "Time."

The trend was beginning to be strongly evident in the British magazines in 1965: Collyn's "Singular Quest of Martin Borg," Moorcock's "Escape from Evening," Harness's "Time Trap," in New *Worlds/* Aldiss' "Man in his Time," Ernest Hill's "Joik," in *Science Fantasy*. (And here again, one sees the pervasive influence of Ballard, all of whose early work was obsessed with Time. And not just the early work: Time, encapsulated, is the topic of *The Crystal World.)* Also from England—although I do not know whether to consider George Langelaan a British, French, or American author—a collection. *Out of Time,* was published by Four Square.

In this country, the stories are just beginning to emerge. The only really notable examples in 1965 were Harlan Ellison's prize-winning " 'Repent, Harlequin,' Said the Ticklockman" (from *Galaxy,* and reprinted in both the SFWA anthology and *World's Best Science Fiction: 1966);* and the second short story in the November 13, 1965, installment of William Maxwell's "Further Tales About Men and Women" in the *New Yorker. (You would have* thought *that he would sooner or later have realized that the time he was spending so freely was next* month's, *and that if he had already lived through the days of this month before it was well begun he was living beyond his means.)*

Nor is it only in fiction that Time is the big upcoming topic. The same themes are burgeoning in a slightly different area. A four-day Interdisciplinary Conference on Perspectives of Time, conducted by the New York Academy of Sciences, included panels on "Concepts of Time"; "The Fabric of Biological Time"; "Man, the Timed, and Man, the Timer"} "Experiential Aspects of Time." An impressive anthology of discussions called Voices of *Time* was published about the same time by Braziller. And in an article in the winter, 1965, *Daedalus,* "The Future as the Basis for Establishing a Shared Culture," by Margaret Mead absorbed the underlying concept, of time-as-tool and time-as-phenomenon, into a philosophy of social change.

As does David Masson, who has supplied only this much information about himself: *In my view the finished story is important or of public interest, but not* the man. *The symbolic overtones are also important but it is better if the reader discover these for himself. I will however say that my age is between forty-five and fifty, that I have a university post, and that I am married with a family.*

"Traveller's Rest" is his first story, although he has published a number of literary-linguistic articles in learned journals in Britain, Europe and the United States.

* * * *

TRAVELLER'S REST
DAVID I. MASSON

It was an apocalyptic sector. Out of the red-black curtain of the forward sight-barrier, which at this distance from the Frontier shut down a mere twenty meters north, came every sort of meteoric horror: fission and fusion explosions, chemical detonations, a super-hail of projectiles of all sizes and basic velocities, sprays of nerve-paralysants and thalamic dopes. The impact devices burst on the barren rock of the slopes or the concrete of the forward stations, some of which were disintegrated or eviscerated every other minute. The surviving installations kept up an equally intense and nearly vertical fire of rockets and shells. Here and there a protectivized figure could be seen "sprinting" up, down or along the slopes on its mechanical "walker" like a frantic ant from an anthill attacked by flamethrowers. Some of the visible oncoming trajectories could be seen snaking overhead into the indigo gloom of the rear sight-curtain, perhaps fifty meters south, which met the steep-falling rock surface forty-odd meters below the observer's eye. East and west, as far as the eye could see, perhaps some forty miles in this clear mountain air despite the debris of explosion (but cut off to west by a spur from the range), the visibility-corridor witnessed a continual onslaught and counter-onslaught of devices. The audibility-corridor was vastly wider than that of sight; the many-pitched din, even through left ear in helm, was considerable.

"Computer-sent, must be," said H's transceiver into his right ear. No sigil preceded this statement, but H knew the tones of B, his next-up, who in any case could be seen a meter away saying it, in the large concrete bubble whence they watched, using a plaspex window and an infrared northviewer with a range of some hundreds of meters forward. His next-up had been in the bunker for three minutes, apparently overchecking, probably for an appreciation to two-up who might be in station VV now.

"Else how can they get minutely impacts here, you mean?" said H.

"Well, of course it could be longrange low-frequency— we don't really know how Time works over There."

"But if the conceleration runs asymptotically to the Frontier, as it should if Their Time works in mirror-image, would anything ever have got over?"

"Doesn't have to, far's I can see—maybe it steepens a lot, then

just falls back at the same angle the other Side," said B's voice, "anyway, I didn't come to talk science: I've news for you, if we hold out the next few seconds here: you're Relieved."

H felt a black inner sight-barrier beginning to engulf him, and a roaring in his ears swallowed up the noise of the bombardment. He bent double as his knees began to buckle, and regained full consciousness. He could see his replacement now, an uncertain-looking figure in prot-suit (like everybody else up here) at the far side of the bunker.

"XN 3, what orders then?" he said crisply, his pulse accelerating.

"XN 2: pick em-kit now, repeat now, rocket 3333 to W, present tag—" holding out a luminous orange label printed with a few coarse black characters—"and proceed as ordered thence."

H stuck up his right thumb from his fist held sideways at elbow length, in salute. It was no situation for facial gestures or unnecessary speech. "XN 3, yes, em-kit, 3333 rocket, tag" (he had taken it in his left glove) "and W orders; parting!"

He missed B's nod as he skimmed on soles to the exit, grabbed a small bundle hanging (one of fifteen) from the fourth hook along, slid down the greasy slide under ground ten metres to a fuel-cell-lit cavern, pressed a luminous button in the wall, watched a lit symbol passing a series of marks, jumped into the low "car" as it ground round the corner, and curled up foetus wise. His weight having set off the cardoor mechanism, the car shut, slipped down and (its clamps settling on H's body) roared off down the chute.

Twenty-five seconds after his "parting" word H uncurled at the forward receiver cell of station W nearly half a mile downslope. He crawled out as the rocket ground off again, walked ten steps onward in this larger version of his northward habitat, saluted thumb-up and presented his tag to two-up (recognized from helm-tint and helm-sign), saying simultaneously, "XN 3 rep, Relieved."

"XN 1 to XN 3: take this" (holding out a similar orange tag plucked from his pocket) "and take rocktrain down, in—seventy seconds. By the way, ever seen a prehis?"

"No, sir."

"Spot through here, then; look like pteros but more primitive."

The infrared telescopic viewer looking northwest passed through the forward sight-barrier which due north was about forty meters away here; well upslope yet still well clear of the dark infrared-radiation barrier could be seen, soundlessly screaming and yammering, two scaly animals about the size of large dogs, but with two legs and heavy wings, flopping around a hump or boulder on the rock. They might have been hit on their way along, and could hardly have had any business on that barren spot, H thought.

“Thanks; odd,” he said. Eleven seconds of the seventy had gone. He pulled out a squirter-cup from the wall and took a drink from the machine, through his helm. Seventeen seconds gone, fifty-three to go.

“XN 1 to XN 3: how are things up there?”

Naturally a report was called for: XN 2 might never return, and communication up-time and down-time was nearly impossible at these latitudes over more than a few meters.

“XN 3. Things have been hotting up all day; I’m afraid a burst through may be attempted in the next hour or so— only my guess, of course. But I’ve never seen anything like it all this time up here. I suppose you’ll have noticed it in W too?”

“XN 1, thanks for report,” was all the answer he got. But he could hear for himself that the blitz was much more intense than any he had known at this level either.

Only twenty-seven seconds remained. He saluted and strode off across the bunker with his em-kit and the new tag. He showed the tag to the guard, who stamped it and pointed wordlessly down a corridor. H ran down this, arriving many meters down the far end at a little gallery. An underslung railguided vehicle with slide-doors opening into cubicles glided quietly alongside. A gallery-guard waved as H and two others waiting opened doors whose indicators were unlit, the doors slid to, and H found himself gently clamped in on a back-tilted seat as the rock train accelerated downhill. After ten seconds it stopped at the next checkhalt, a panel in the cubicle ceiling lit up to state “diversion, left,” presumably because the direct route had been destroyed. The train now appeared to accelerate but more gently, swung away to left (as H could feel), and stopped at two more checkhalts before swinging back to right and finally decelerating, coming to rest and opening some four hundred eighty seconds after its start, by Had’s personal chronograph, instead of the two hundred he had expected.

At this point daylight could again be seen. From the top bunker where XN 2 had discharged him, Had had now gone some ten miles south and nearly three thousand meters down, not counting detours. The forward sight-barrier here was hidden by a shoulder of mountain covered in giant lichen, but the southern barrier was evident as a violet-black fog-wall a quarter of a mile off. Lichens and some sort of grass-like vegetation covered much of the neighboring landscape, a series of hollows and ravines. Noise of war was still audible, mingled with that of a storm, but nearby crashes were not frequent and comparatively little damage could be seen. The sky overhead was turbulent. Some very odd-looking animals, perhaps between a lizard and a stoat in general appearance, were swarming up and down a tree-fern near by. Six men in all got out of the rocktrain, besides Had.

Two and three marched off in two groups down a track eastward. One (not one of those who had got in at W) stayed with Had.

"I'm going down to the Great Valley; haven't seen it for twenty days; everything'll be changed. Are you sent far?" said the other man's voice in Had's right ear through the transceiver.

"I—I—I'm Relieved," tried Had uncertainly.

"Well I'm . . . disintegrated!" was all the other man could manage. Then, after a minute, "Where will you go?"

"Set up a business way south, I think. Heat is what suits me, heat and vegetation. I have a few techniques I could put to good use in management of one sort or another. I'm sorry—I never meant to plume it over you with this—but you did ask me."

"That's all right. You certainly must have Luck, though. I never met a man who was Relieved. Make good use of it, won't you. It helps to make the Game worth-while, up here —I mean, to have met a man who is joining all those others we're supposed to be protecting—it makes them real to us in a way."

"Very fine of you to take it that way," said Had. .

"No—I mean it. Otherwise we'd wonder if there *was* any people to hold the Front for."

"Well, if there weren't, how'd the techniques have developed for holding on up here?" put in Had.

"Some of the Teccols I remember in the Great Valley might have developed enough techniques for that."

"Yes, but think of all the pure science you need to work up the techniques from; I doubt if that could have been studied inside the Valley Teccols."

"Possibly not—that's a bit beyond me," said the other's voice a trifle huffily, and they stood on in silence till the next cable-car came up and round at the foot of the station. Had let the man get in it—he felt he owed him that— and a minute later (five seconds only, up in his first bunker, he suddenly thought ironically and parenthetically) the next car appeared. He swung himself in just as a very queer-looking purple bird with a long bare neck alighted on the stoat-lizards' tree-fern. The cable-car sped down above the ravines and hollows, the violet southern curtain backing still more swiftly away from it. As the time-gradient became less steep his brain began to function better and a sense of well-being and meaningfulness grew in him. The car's speed slackened.

Had was glad he still wore his prot-suit when a couple of chemical explosions burst close to the cable line, presumably by chance, only fifty meters below him. He was even more glad of it when flying material from a third broke the cable itself well downslope and the emergency cable stopped him at the next pylon.

He slid down the pylon's lift and spoke with his transceiver close to the telephone at the foot. He was told to make west two miles to the next cable-car line. His interlocutor, he supposed, must be speaking from an exchange more or less on the same latitude as that of his pylon, since communication even here was still almost impossible north-south except at ranges of some meters. Even so, there was a squeaky sound about the other voice and its speech came out clipped and rapid. He supposed his own voice would sound gruff and drawled to the other.

Using his "walker," he picked his way across ravines and gullies, steering by compass and watching the sight-barriers and the Doppler tint-equator ahead for yawing. "All very well for that man to talk about Teccols," he thought, "but he must realize that no civilization could have evolved from anywhere as far north as the Great Valley: it's far too young to have even evolved Men by itself—at least at this end; I'm not sure how far south the eastern end goes."

The journey was not without its hazards: there were several nearby explosions, and what looked like a suspicious artificial miasma, easily overlooked, lay in two hollows which he decided to go round. Moreover, an enraged giant bear-sloth came at him in a mauve shrub-thicket and had to be eliminated with his quickgun. But to one who had just come down from that mountain-hell all this seemed like a pleasant stroll.

Finally he came upon the line of pylons and pressed the telephone button at the foot of the nearest, after checking that its latitude-number was nearly right. The same voice, a little less outlandish and rapid, told him a car would arrive in three-quarters of a minute and would be arranged to stop at his pylon; if it did not, he was to press the emergency button near by. Despite his "walker," nearly an hour had gone by since he set out by it. Perhaps ninety minutes had passed since he first left the top bunker—well over a minute and a half of their time there.

The car came and stopped, he scrambled up and in, and this time the journey passed without incident, except for occasional sudden squalls, and the passage of flocks of nervous crows, until the car arrived at its terminus, a squat tower on the heathy slopes. The car below was coming up, and a man in it called through his transceiver as they crept past each other, "First of a bunch!" Sure enough the terminus interior was filled with some twenty men all equipped — almost enough to have warranted sending them up by polyheli, thought Hadol, rather than wait for cars at long intervals. They looked excited and not at all cast down, but Hadol refrained from giving away his future. He passed on to the ratchet-car way and found himself one of a group of men more curious about the landscape than

about their fellows. A deep reddish curtain of indeterminate thickness absorbed the shoulders of the heights about a quarter mile northward, and the bluish fog terminated the view over the valley at nearly half a mile southward, but between the two the latitudinal zone was tolerably clear and devoid of obvious signs of war. Forests of pine and lower down of oak and ash covered the slopes, until finally these disappeared in the steepening edge of the Great Valley, whose meadows could however be glimpsed past the bluff. Swirling cloud-shadows played over the ground, skirts and tassels of rain and hail swept across it, and there was the occasional flash and rumble of a storm. Deer could be seen briefly here and there, and dense clouds of gnats danced above the trees.

A journey of some fifty minutes took them down, past two empty stations, through two looped tunnels and among waterfalls and under cliffs where squirrels leapt across from dangling root to root, through a steadily warmer and warmer air to the pastures and cornfields of the Great Valley, where a narrow village of concrete huts and wooden cabins, Emmel, nestled on a knoll above the winding river, and a great road ran straight to the east, parallel to a railway. The river was not, indeed, large here—a shallow, stony but attractive stream, and the Great Valley (all of whose breadth could now be seen) was at this western point no more than a third of a mile across. The southward slopes terminating the North-Western Plateau, now themselves visible, were rich in shrubland.

The utter contrast with what was going on above and, in top bunker time, perhaps four minutes ago, made Hadolar nearly drunk with enjoyment. However, he presented his luminous tag and had it (and his permanent checktab) checked for radiation, countersigned and stamped by the guard commander at the military terminal. The detachable piece at the end of the tag was given back to him to be slipped into the identity disc which was, as always, let into a slot in one of his ribs; the other portion was filed away. He got out of his prot-suit and "walker," gave up his gun, ammunition and em-kit, was given two wallets of one thousand credit tokens each and a temporary civsuit. An orderly achieved the identity-disk operation. The whole ceremony from his arrival took two hundred fifty seconds flat—two seconds up in the top bunker. He walked out like an heir to the earth.

The air was full of scents of hay, berries, flowers, manure. He took intoxicated gulps of it. At the freshhouse he ordered, paid for, and drank four decis of light ale, then ordered a sandwich and an apple, paid and ate. The next train east, he was told, would be in a quarter of an hour. He had been in the place perhaps half an hour. No time to spend watching the stream, but he walked to the railhead, asked for a ticket to Veruam by the Sea some four hundred miles east

and, as the detailed station map showed him, about thirty miles south, paid, and selected a compartment when the train arrived from its shed.

A farm girl and a sleepy-looking male civilian, probably an army contractor, got in one after the other close behind Hadolar, and the compartment contained just these three when the train left. He looked at the farm girl with interest —she was blond and placid—as the first female he had seen for a hundred days. Fashions had not changed radically in thirty-odd years, at least among Emmel farm-girls. After a while he averted his gaze and considered the landscape. The valley was edged by bluffs of yellowish stone now to north and now to south. Even here their difference in hue was perceptible—the valley had broadened slightly; or perhaps he was being fanciful and the difference was due solely to normal light-effects. The river meandered gracefully from side to side and from cliff to cliff, with occasional islands, small and crowned with hazel. Here and there a fisher could be seen by the bank, or wading in the stream. Farm houses passed at intervals. North above the valley rose the great slopes, apparently devoid of signs of human life except for funicular stations and the occasional heliport, until they vanished into the vast crimson-bronze curtain of nothingness which grew insensibly out of a half cloud-covered green sky near the zenith. Swirls of whirlwind among the clouds told of the effects of the time-gradient on weather, and odd lightning-streaks, unnoticed further north amid the war, appeared to pirouette among them. To the south the plateau was still hidden by the height of the bluffs, but the beginnings of the dark blue haze grew out of the sky above the valley skyline. The train stopped at a station and the girl, Hadolar saw with a pang, got out. Two soldiers got in in light dress and swapped minor reminiscences: they were on short-term leave to the next stop, a small town, Granev, and eyed Hadolar's temporary suit but said nothing.

Granev was mostly built of steel and glass: not an exciting place. It made a one-block twenty-story five-mile strip on either side of the road, with overpass-canopy. (How lucky, thought Hadolar, that speech and travel could go so far down this Great Valley without interlatitude problems: virtually the whole four hundred fifty miles.) Industry and some of the Teccols now appeared. The valley had broadened until, from the line, its southern cliffs began to drown in the blue haze half a mile off. Soon the northern slopes loomed a smoky ruddy -brown before they, too, were swallowed up. The river, swollen by tributaries, was a few hundred meters across now and deep whenever the line crossed it. So far they had only gone fifty-odd miles. The air was warmer again and the vegetation more lush. Almost all the passengers were civilians now, and some noted Hadolar's temporary suit

ironically. He would buy himself a wardrobe at Veruam at the first opportunity, he decided. But at the moment he wished to put as many miles as possible between himself and that bunker in the shortest personal time.

Some hours later the train arrived at Veruam by the North-Eastern Sea. Thirty miles long, forty storys high, and five hundred meters broad north-south, it was an imposing city. Nothing but plain was to be seen in the outskirts, for the reddish fog still obliterated everything about four miles to the north, and the bluish one smothered the view southward some seven. A well-fed Hadolaris visited one of the city's Rehabilitation Advisors, for civilian techniques and material resources had advanced enormously since his last acquaintance with them, and idioms and speech-sounds had changed bewilderingly, while the whole code of social behavior was terrifyingly different. Armed with some manuals, a pocket recorder, and some standard speechform and folk-way tapes, he rapidly purchased thin clothing, stormwear, writing implements, further recording tools, lugbags and other personal gear. After a night at a good guestery, Hadolaris sought interviews with the employing offices of seven subtropical development agencies, was tested and, armed with seven letters of introduction, boarded the night liner rocktrain for the south past the shore of the North-Eastern Sea and to Olulu etang some three hundred sixty miles south. One of the tailors who had fitted him up had revealed that on quiet nights very low-pitched rumblings were to be heard from, presumably, the mountains northward. Hadolaris wanted to get as far from that North as he conveniently could.

He awoke among palms and savannah-reeds. There was no sign of either sight-barrier down here. The city was dispersed into compact blocks of multistory buildings, blocks separated by belts of rich woodland and drive-like roadways and monorails. Unlike the towns of the Great Valley, it was not arranged on an east-west strip, though its north-south axis was still relatively short. Hadolarisóndamo found himself a small guestery, studied a plan of the city and its factory areas, bought a guide to the district and settled down to several days of exploration and enquiry before visiting the seven agencies themselves. His evenings were spent in adult classes, his night absorbing the speech-form recordings unconsciously in sleep. In the end after nineteen days (about four hours at Veruam's latitude, four minutes at that of Emmel, less than two seconds at the higher bunker, he reflected) he obtained employment as a minor sales manager of vegetable products in one of the organizations.

Communication north and south, he found, was possible verbally for quite a number of miles, provided one knew the rules. In

consequence the zoning here was far from severe and travel and social facilities covered a very wide area. One rarely saw the military here. Hadolarisóndamo bought an automob and, as he rose in the organization's hierarchy, a second one for pleasure. He found himself well liked and soon had a circle of friends and a number of hobbies. After a number of love affairs he married a girl whose father was higher up in the organization, and, some five years after his arrival in the city, became the father of a boy.

"Arison!" called his wife from the boat. Their son, aged five, was puttering at the warm surface of the lake with his fists over the gunwale. Hadolarisóndamo was painting on the little island, quick lines and sweeps across the easeled canvas, a pattern of light and shade bursting out of the swamp trees over a little bay. "Arison! I can't get this thing to start. Could you swim over and try?"

"Five minutes more, Mihányo. Must get this down."

Sighing, KaraMihanyolàsve continued, but without much hope, to fish from the bows with her horizontal yo-yo gadget. Too quiet round here for a bite. A parakeet flashed in the branches to right. Derestó, the boy, stopped hitting the water, and pulled over the tube-window, let it into the lake and got Mihányo to slide on its lightswitch. Then he peered this way and that under the surface, giving little exclamations as tiny fish of various shapes and hues shot across. Presently Arison called over, folded up his easel, pulled off his trousers, propped paints and canvas on top of everything, and swam over. There were no crocs in this lake, hippo were far off, filariasis and bilharzia had been eliminated here. Twenty minutes' rather tense tinkering got things going, and the silent fuel-cell driven screw was ready to pilot them over to the painting island and thence across the lake to where a little stream's current pushed out into the expanse. They caught four. Presently back under the westering sun to the jetty, tie-up and home in the automob.

* * * *

By the time Derestó was eight and ready to be formally named LafonDerestónami, he had a sister of three and a baby brother of one. He was a keen swimmer and boatman, and was developing into a minor organizer, both at home and in school. Arison was now third in the firm, but kept his balance. Holidays were spent either in the deep tropics (where one could gain on the time-exchange) or among the promontories on the southern shores of the North-Eastern Sea (where one had to lose), or, increasingly, in the agricultural stream-scored western uplands, where a wide vista of the world could in many areas

be seen and the cloudscapes had full play. Even there the sight-barriers were a mere fogginess near the north and south horizons, backed by a darkness in the sky.

Now and then, during a bad night, Arison thought about the "past." He generally concluded that, even if a breakthrough had been imminent in, say, half an hour from his departure, this could hardly affect the lives of himself and his wife, or even of their children, down here in the south, in view of the time-contraction southwards. Also, he reflected, since nothing ever struck further south than a point north of Emmel's latitude, the ballistic attacks must be mounted close to the Frontier; or if they were not, then the Enemy must lack all knowledge of either southern time-gradients or southern geography, so that the launching of missiles from well north of the Frontier to pass well south of it would not be worth while. And even the fastest heli which could be piloted against time conceleration would, he supposed, never get through.

Always adaptable, Arison had never suffered long from the disabilities incident on having returned after a time at the Front. Rocktrain travel and other communications had tended to unify the speech and the ethos, though naturally the upper reaches of the Great Valley and the military zone in the mountains of the North were linguistically and sociologically somewhat isolated. In the western uplands, too, pockets of older linguistic forms and old-fashioned attitudes still remained, as the family found on its holidays. By and large, however, the whole land spoke the tongue of the "contemporary" subtropical lowlands, inevitably modified of course by the onomatosyntomy or "shortmouth" of latitude. A "contemporary" ethical and social code had also spread. The southern present may be said to have colonized the northern past, even geological past, somewhat as the birds and other travelling animals had done, but with the greater resources of human wits, flexibility, traditions and techniques.

Ordinary people bothered little about the war. Time conceleration was on their side. Their spare mental energies were spent in a vast selection of plays and ploys, making, representing, creating, relishing, criticizing, theorizing, discussing, arranging, organizing, co-operating, but not so often out of their own zone. Arison found himself the member of a dozen interweaving circles, and Mihányo was even more involved. Not that they were never alone: the easy tempo of work and life with double "week" of five days' work, two days free, seven days' work and six days free, the whole staggered across the population and in the organizations, left much leisure time which could be spent on their own selves. Arison took up texture-sculpting, then returned after two years to painting, but with magnetobrush instead of spraypen;

purified by his texture-sculpting period, he achieved a powerful area control and won something of a name for himself. Mihányo, on the other hand, became a musician. Derestó, it was evident, was going to be a handler of men and societies, besides having, at thirteen, entered the athletic age. His sister of eight was a great talker and arguer. The boy of six was, they hoped, going to be a writer, at least in his spare time: he had a keen eye for things, and a keen interest in telling about them. Arison was content to remain, when he had reached it, second in the firm: a chiefship would have told on him too much. He occasionally lent his voice to the administration of local affairs, but took no major part.

* * * *

Mihányo and Arison were watching a firework festival on the North-Eastern Sea from their launch, off one of the southern promontories. Up here, a fine velvety backdrop for the display was made by the inky black of the northern sight-barrier, which cut off the stars in a gigantic arc. Fortunately the weather was fine. The. silhouettes of the firework boats could just be discerned. In a world which knew no moon the pleasures of a “white night” were often only to be got by such displays. The girl and Derestó were swimming round and round the launch. Even the small boy had been brought out, and was rather blearily staring northward. Eventually the triple green star went up and the exhibition was over; at the firework boats a midnight had been reached. Derestó and Venoyyè were called in, located by a flare, and ultimately prevailed on to climb in, shivering slightly, and dry off in the hot-air blaster, dancing about like two imps. Arison turned the launch for the shore and Silarrè was found to be asleep. So was Venoyyè when they touched the jetty. Their parents had each to carry one in and up to the beach-house.

Next morning they packed and set out in the automob for home. Their twenty days’ holiday had cost one hundred sixty days of Oluluetang time. Heavy rain was falling when they reached the city. Mihányo, when the children were settled in, had a long talk on the opsiphone with her friend across the breadth of Oluluetang: she (the friend) had been with her husband badger-watching in the western uplands.

Finally Arison chipped in and, after general conversation, exchanged some views with the husband on developments in local politics.

“Pity one grows old so fast down here,” lamented Mihányo that evening, “if only life could go on for ever!”

“For ever is a big word. Besides, being down here makes no difference to the feeling—you don’t feel it any slower up on the Sea, do you, now?”

“I suppose not. But if only . . .”

To switch her mood, Arison began to talk about Derestó and his future. Soon they were planning their children’s lives for them in the way parents cannot resist doing. With his salary and investments in the firm they would set up the boy for a great administrator, and still have enough to give the others every opportunity.

Next morning it was still in something of a glow that Arison bade farewell to his wife and went off to take up his work in the offices. He had an extremely busy day and was coming out of the gates in the waning light to his automob in its stall, when he found standing round it three of the military. He looked enquiringly at them as he approached with his personal pulse-key in hand.

“You are VSQ 389 MLD 194 RV 27 XN 3, known as Hadolarisóndamo, resident at” (naming the address) “and subpresident today in this firm.” The cold tones of the leader were a statement, not a question.

“Yes,” whispered Arison as soon as he could speak.

“I have a warrant for your immediate re-employment with our Forces in the place at which you first received your order for Release. You must come with us forthwith.” The leader produced a luminous orange tag with black markings.

“But my wife and family!”

“They are being informed. We have no time.”

“My firm?”

“Your chief is being informed. Come now.”

“I—I—I must set my affairs in order.”

“Impossible. No time. Urgent situation. Your family and firm must do all that between them. Our orders override everything.”

“Wh—wh—what is your authority? Can I see it please?”

“This tag should suffice. It corresponds to the tagend which I hope you still have in your identity disk—we will check all that en route. Come on now.”

“But I *must* see your authority, how do I know, for instance, that you are not trying to rob me, or something?”

“If you know the code you’ll realize that these symbols can only fit one situation. But I’ll stretch a point: you may look at this warrant, but don’t touch it.”

The other two closed in. Arison saw that they had their quickguns trained on him. The leader pulled out a broad screed. Arison, as well as the dancing characters would let him, resolved them in the light of the leader’s torch into an order to collect him, Arison, by today at

such and such a time, local Time, if possible immediately on his leaving his place of work (specified); and below, that one man be detailed to call Mihányo by opsiphone simultaneously, and another to call the president of the organization. The Remployee and escort to join the military rocktrain to Veruam (which was leaving within about fifteen minutes). The Remployee to be taken as expeditiously as possible to the bunker (VV) and thence to the higher bunker (from which he had come some twenty years before, but only about ten minutes in the Time of that bunker, it flashed through Arison's brain—apart from six or seven minutes corresponding to his journey south).

"How do they know if I'm fit enough for this job after all these years?"

"They've kept checks on you, no doubt."

Arison thought of tripping one and slugging two and doing a bolt, but the quickguns of the two were certainly trained upon him. Besides, what would that gain him? A few hours' start, with unnecessary pain, disgrace and ruin on Mihányo, his children and himself, for he was sure to be caught.

"The automob," he said ridiculously.

"A small matter. Your firm will deal with that."

"How can I settle my children's future?"

"Come on, no use arguing. You are coming now, alive or dead, fit or unfit."

Speechless, Arison let himself be marched off to a light military vehicle.

In five minutes he was in the rocktrain, an armored affair with strong windows. In ten more minutes, with the train moving off, he was stripped of his civilian clothes and possessions (to be returned later to his wife, he learnt), had his identity disc extracted and checked and its Relief tagend removed, and a medical checkup was begun on him. Apparently this was satisfactory to the military authorities. He was given military clothing.

He spent a sleepless night in the train trying to work out what he had done with *this,* what would be made of *that,* who Mihányo could call upon in need, who would be likely to help her, how she would manage with the children, what (as nearly as he could work it out) they would get from a pension which he was led to understand would be forthcoming from his firm, how far they could carry on with their expected future.

A gray pre-dawn saw the train's arrival at Veruam. Food-less (he had been unable to eat any of the rations) and without sleep, he gazed vacantly at the marshaling-yards. The body of men traveling on the train (apparently only a few were Remployees) were got into closed trucks and the long convoy set out for Emmel.

At this moment Hadolaris' brain began to re-register the conceleration situation. About half a minute must have passed since his departure from Olulu etang, he supposed, in the Time of his top bunker. The journey to Emmel might take up another two minutes. The route from Emmel to that bunker might take a further two and a half minutes there, as far as one could work out the calculus. Add the twenty-years' (and southward journey's) sixteen to seventeen minutes, and he would find himself in that bunker not more than some twenty-two minutes after he had left it. (Mihan, Deres and the other two would all be nearly ten years older and the children would have begun to forget him.) The blitz was unprecedentedly intense when he had left, and he could recall (indeed it had figured in several nightmares since) his prophecy to XN 1 that a breakthrough might be expected within the hour. If he survived the blitz, he was unlikely to survive a breakthrough; and a breakthrough of what? No one had ever seen the Enemy, this Enemy that for Time immemorial had been striving to get across the Frontier. If It got right over, the twilight of the race was at hand. No horror, it was believed at the Front, could equal the horror of that moment. After a hundred miles or so he slept, from pure exhaustion, sitting up in a cramped position, wedged against the next man. Stops and starts and swerves woke him at intervals. The convoy was driving at maximum speeds.

At Emmel he stumbled out to find a storm lashing down. The river was in spate. The column was marched to the depot. Hadolar was separated out and taken in to the terminal building where he was given inoculations, issued with "walker," quickgun, em-kit, prot-suit and other impedimenta, and in a quarter of an hour (perhaps seven or eight seconds up at the top bunker) found himself entering a polyheli with thirty other men. This had barely topped the first rise and into sunlight when explosions and flarings were visible on all sides. The machine forged on, the sight-curtains gradually closing up behind and retreating grudgingly before it. The old Northern vertigo and somnambulism re-engulfed Had. To think of Kar and their offspring now was to tap the agony of a ghost who shared his brain and body. After twenty-five minutes they landed close to the foot of a rocktrain line. The top-bunker lapse of "twenty-two minutes" was going, Had saw, to be something less. He was the third to be bundled into the rocktrain compartments, and one hundred ninety seconds saw him emerging at the top and heading for bunker W. XN 1 greeted his salute merely with a curt command to proceed by rocket to the top bunker. A few moments more and he was facing XN 2.

"Ah, here you are. Your Relief was killed so we sent back for you. You'd only left a few seconds." A ragged hole in the bunker wall testified to the incident. The relief's cadaver, stripped, was being

carted off to the disposal machine.

"XN 2. Things are livelier than ever. They certainly are hot stuff. Every new offensive from here is pitched back at us in the same style within minutes, I notice. That new cannon had only just started up when back came the same shells—I never knew They had them. Tit for tat."

Into H's brain, seemingly clarified by hunger and exhaustion and much emotion, flashed an unspeakable suspicion, one that he could never prove or disprove, having too little knowledge and experience, too little overall view. No one had ever seen the Enemy. No one knew how or when the War had begun. Information and communication were paralysingly difficult up here. No one knew what really happened to Time as one came close to the Frontier, or beyond it. Could it be that the conceleration there became infinite and that there was nothing beyond the Frontier? Could all the supposed missiles of the Enemy be their own, somehow returning? Perhaps the war had started with a peasant explorer lightheartedly flinging a stone northwards, which returned and struck him? Perhaps there was, then, no Enemy?

"XN 3. Couldn't that gun's own shells be reflected back *from* the Frontier, then?"

"XN 2. Impossible. Now you are to try to reach that forward missile post by the surface—our tunnel is destroyed —at 15° 40' East —you can just see the hump near the edge of the I/R viewer's limit— with this message; and tell him verbally to treble output."

The ragged hole was too small. H left by the forward port. He ran, on his "walker," into a ribbon of landscape which became a thicket of fire, a porcupine of fire, a Nessus-shirt to the Earth, as in a dream. Into an unbelievable super-crescendo of sound, light, heat, pressure and impacts he ran, on and on up the now almost invisible slope.

Time can run backwards; the future is as real as the past; and the same event can be in one man's future and another man's past.

Using or proving these propositions, scientists groped along the boundaries between physics and philosophy at the American Physical Society meeting here today.

Time plays a major role, as the search for a theory to explain the universe and all its constituents continues.

... It was also suggested that we live in only one particular model of the universe, one of the several models permitted by the theory of relativity. In this universe, it has been speculated, past and future are distinguishable by the fact that it is expanding. Future time is linked to a larger universe. If shrinking occurred, time might seem to run backwards. (From a news report of a meeting of the Physical Sciences

Association.)

* * * *

Meanwhile, Fred Hoyle has published *(Galaxies,* Nuclei, *and Quasars,* Harper and Row, 1965) a book questioning his own "steady-state" theory of cosmology, in the light of new information about quasars; and all around, it seems, the more we know, the less we seem to know—and the more we seem on the verge of Knowing. (Just *what, we* will have to wait a bit to find out—trusting in Time to keep moving forward for a while.)

The last word, for this year, comes in still one more "first," from a freshman at Knox College in Illinois.

* * * *

ADO ABOUT NOTHING
BOB OTTUM, JR.

Today we reached the end of the universe. It was a big sign with red letters all lit up.

this is the end of the universe-
do not proceed beyond this point

We pulled the ship in close and cut all the power. Frank hollered over the intercom:

"What in the hell is this?"

We didn't have any charts of the area. The reason we had come out this far was so that I could make some. No ship had ever been out this far before.

"Well, Frank, I ... I guess it's the end of the universe. That's what the sign says."

"Dammit, there isn't any end to the universe! It just keeps on going! You know that as well as I do. If this is your idea of a joke . . ."

"Ah, Frank, I didn't put the sign there. This is uncharted area, you know, and . . ."

"Well, give me a fix and we'll fly around the thing!"

"But Frank, it says . . ."

"I see what it says! Now give me a fix!"

"Yes sir. We're in section six, semisection nine, sector three, parallel eight, diagonal seven, subsector . . ."

"Johnny?"

"Yes?"

"Did you ever read that story about the guys who are out in a space ship, and they come to a wall?"

"No sir."

"Well, they try to get past the wall, and when they do, they die, because the wall is what separates heaven from the rest of the universe."

"Oh."

"It looks solid, doesn't it?"

"Well, yeah, but that could just be an optical illusion."

"Do you think we ought to chance revving her up to full power and going ahead?"

"Well, I don't know sir. Maybe one of us better get out and have a close look at the thing. It could be just a cloud of dust particles that ..

."

"Can we pull in any closer?"

"Maybe. If it is solid, then it may have some gravity of its own. Then it would just pull us right smack into it."

"Are you a religious man, Johnny?"

"No ... I, uh ... well, how do you mean?"

"I mean like believing that this is the wall that separates heaven from the rest of the universe. Do you think there is a heaven?"

"I guess there's a heaven. But I never thought . . ."

"We could even be dead right now. Like, you know, maybe we crashed into an asteroid or something. Maybe we're dead, and now we've reached heaven."

"I don't feel like I'm dead. Wouldn't we have remembered it if we had crashed?"

"Yeah, I guess so. One of us is going to have to go out there and have a look."

"I'll go, Frank."

"No you won't. The Space Administration needs men like you. I'll go."

"But Frank, what if . . ."

"Aw, come on! All this upset over nothing! Let's behave like a couple of men."

"Okay. You're right. Can I help you put on your suit?"

"Yeah. Meet me in the pressure room."

Ours was one of the two-man jobs, used only for charting. One of us sat at either end. He flew, and I drew. The pressure room was right in the middle of the ship. I helped the captain put on his suit, and then went back to watch him on the television monitor.

"How is it out there, Frank?"

"I'm fine. I'm almost there. I think I can see the ... the . J . well, I'll be damned!"

"Is something the matter? Frank?"

He was right up against the wall. It was solid all right. I could see him hunched over in one little spot.

"Johnny?"

"Yes sir?"

"Have you got a quarter?"

"A ... a what?"

"A quarter. Twenty-five cents."

"Well, I don't know, sir. What do you need a quarter for?"

"You find me one. I'm coming back for it."

There was some money in the ship. I don't know why, but for some reason, somebody had known to have some money on board. When the captain got back, I gave him the money.

“Why do you want a quarter, Frank?”

“You’d better get one for yourself, too. And start getting your suit on. I’ll be right back.”

He took the quarter and left. And he came right back. But there was something wrong. His eyes were all glassy, and his mouth just hung loosely at the jaw. His eyebrows were turned up, and his forehead was all wrinkled.

“What is it, Frank? What’s the matter?”

“It was nothing. Really. It was nothing.”

* * * *

When I got about twenty feet away from the wall, I could see them. There were hundreds of them, plastered all over it. Old signs. There was an “Eat At Joe’s,” and a great big “Kilroy was here,” and hearts with names in them. As I got closer, I could even see the hand-scrawled four-letter words with crude drawings.

As I got right up against the wall, I noticed the little white square sign. It said,

obviously you are not convinced that this is the end of the universe. if you will place a quarter in the slot below, the peep-hole will open, and you can see for yourself.

And the captain was right. I paid my quarter and looked through the peep-hole. But it was nothing.

SUMMATION

Burroughs would have been lost . . . Edgar Rice Burroughs, that is. Since the days of his novel The Warlord of Mars *things have changed in outer space. Yet William Burroughs, he of* Naked Lunch *and* Nova Express *fame, would have loved nearly every minute of it.*

At ten o'clock on Sunday morning, when the decent folk of London were still in their beds, delegates to the 23rd World Science Fiction Convention in London were discussing "The Robot in the Executive Suite," speculating on practical optimums for robot construction.

*Only one lonely bug-eyed monster appeared at the convention— at the costume ball/ and Penguin Books had great difficulty in persuading a Dalek [*Unautomated, man-sized U.K. version of Robbie the Robot—controls, mike, etc., are inside, as is operator.*] to appear. Monsters and Martians get harder to find every day. Science fiction, since the good old days when Hugo Gernsback first named the genre "Scientifiction" and printed space operatics in pulp magazines, has come of a respectable age. Unlikely Martians are of less interest than what* one *British writer, J. G. Ballard, has called "inner space," a very real world. In the space age Jules Verne can't shine a candlepower before the reality of Gemini.*

This was the opening of the *Spectator's* report on the World Science Fiction Convention in London last August. The *London Sunday Times Magazine,* shortly afterward, came out with a special s-f section: an article on the Clarke-Kubrick movie, one on the BBC's (then) forthcoming s-f drama series, and a thoughtful profile of John W. Campbell, editor of *Analog,* which summed up:

*. . . Life to Campbell is a gigantic experiment in form, and earth the forcing-house—*an *impeccable vision, but one not warmed (in his theories, that is) by a feeling for the pain or personal potential of the individuals in the experiment. That kind of* gentleness in *expression seemed to disappear with Don A. Stuart.*

So that, ironically, as s-f becomes increasingly respectable, John Campbell, its acknowledged father-figure, can't really claim his throne. He provides the continuity, he shaped much of the thought, he made many reputations. S-f narrowed from the vastness of space to the greater complexity of "sociological" s-f with him presiding. But now it is narrowing towards *the highly* focused, *upside-down detail of "innerspace." The tone is personal and subjective, the quality of expression important. . . . There is even a literary magazine:* SF Horizons. None *of this is Campbell's style.*

You may disagree with the views of either or both reporters (Bill Butler in the *Spectator,* Pal Williams in the *Times Magazine).* What is significant is that they *had* views, and expressed them intelligently;

that neither one approached the job in the role of literary slummer, or even intrepid anthropologist among the fantasists, but simply and seriously as observers reporting on a field they knew and understood, and believed to be of interest to other readers.

I was about to say, it couldn't happen here—but I suspect the difference in attitude is not so much spatial as temporal. What has already happened there is just beginning to happen here.

Which is to say: the big news in s-f this year is mostly not *in* s-f—not this side of the ocean. (Exceptions: the establishment of the SFWA; and Doubleday's expanded publishing schedule, under the supervision of Lawrence P. Ashmead, who looks to be the best thing that has happened to s-f book publishing here in a long time.)

In a sense, the biggest news of the year is that it is harder than ever to locate on the literary map any reliable boundary line between s-f and anything else. The other side of the coin, whose tail is the lack of focus and *esprit* in the specialty field here, is, I suppose, the diminishment of spirited opposition or snobbism directed *at* the field. To some extent, this is a self-reproducing cycle; to a greater degree, the changing faces on both sides are being shaped by pressures initiating entirely outside the local literary scene, particularly such adjacent areas as education, advertising, psychology, and the Think Factory phenomenon. The s-f label becomes ludicrous, not to say invisible, when advertisements like the star-sprinkled page with the cute little capsule through whose wide-vision window a cheery astronaut and his mouth organ illustrate the pitch: "Three billion people will look up to you ... on Dec. 16, 1965, the Hohner Harmonica became the first musical instrument to be played in outer space," appear in the same sort of magazines which now publish such stories as "Game," "Somewhere Not far from Here," "The Girl Who Drew the Gods," "The Drowned Giant" (and Stanley Elkin's "Perlmutter at the East Pole" in the Post), with neither apologies, explanations, nor exclamation points.

I mention these titles in particular because they are neither whimsical fantasies, space-cowboy adventures, sex-and-sci-fi spoofs, nor sprightly satires, but serious speculative fiction of a kind that actually had no market here a few years ago (bar he infrequent *F&SF* acceptance).

It is part of the same happy blurring of edges that Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon* was issued recently by Harcourt with neither labels nor disclaimers on the jacket—and that Gold Medal's Beaumont selection. *The Magic Man,* did specify "science fantasy" out front, when the earlier collections from which it was culled had avoided the tag like the plague-carrier it was known to be for a serious and talented young writer.

It almost seems that the trend is to using the label when it seems helpful, and omitting it when it does not. One hesitates to make any assumption of such widespread sanity, but the magazine situation almost requires it. Some readers, and most writers, will already have noticed that this *Annual* contains no Honorable Mentions listing. For the last two or three years, the attempt to compile such a list has been increasingly frustrating. The diffusion is too great: Even if it were within my powers to be certain I have seen everything entitled to consideration in a given year, I no longer know where to draw the line.

I use poetry, and sometimes cartoons, and frequently newspaper pieces among the selections: Ought they to be covered in the Mentions too? What about British publications, and English-language books published in other countries? How about things like the *Christian Science Monitor's* "Martian papers," describing the amusement along' the Canal at UFO-nuts who claim to have seen six-foot-lall metallic-dothed extraterrestrials? Or the deadpan stuff the *Realist* has begun to use (since they broke the s-f ice with Harvey Bilker's "Genetic Faux Pas")? How in the *world* do you decide on a listing for (almost anything from) Roger Price's inflammatory *Grump?* What about Fernando Krahn's cartoons in the *Reporter*? How about poetry? Or critical writing?

The answer, of course, was to mention all these other things in the Summation, which began to make the addition of the HM list not only burdensome to me and unfair to authors whose work I would not discover till two months, or two years, later, but foolish as well, since much of the highest-quality work was mentioned only off-list. The new answer is to omit any pretense at publication of a comprehensive listing. Most of the items of special merit I noticed during the year have already been mentioned in the story notes) there are a few others I feel should not be entirely passed by— most importantly, some new names from the 1965 magazines:

From *Amazing* and *Fantastic*—Stanley E. Aspiltle, Jr., John Douglas, Alfred Grossman, Judith E. Schrier.

From *If*—John McCallum, D. M. Melton, Laurence S. Todd.

From *Analog*—Michael Karageorge, Laurence A. Perkins.

From *F&SF*—John Thomas Richards.

There were also some stories of special interest by established authors, which did not, one way or another, get mentioned inside: Miriam Allen de Ford's "The Expendables," Chad Oliver's "End of the Line," Edgar Pangborn's "Wogglebeast," all from *F&SF;* William F. Temple's "The Legend of Ernie Deacon" and James H. Schmitz's "The Pork Chop Tree," from *Analog;* Lloyd Biggie, Jr.'s "Pariah Planet" and Theodore L. Thomas' "Manfire," from *Worlds of* Tomorrow, Gerald

Pearce's "Security Syndrome," from *If,* and Richard Wilson's "Harry Protagonist, Brain-Drainer," from *Galax/;* "Don't Touch Me, I'm Sensitive," by James Stamers, in Gamma; "The Casting Couch," by Lewis Kovner, in Rogue; Florence Engel Randall's "The Watchers," in *Harper's;* and stories from *all* over by Frank Herbert: "Committee of the Whole" *(Galaxy),* "The GM Effect" *(Analog),* "Greenslaves" *(Amazing)*.

And there was Boris Vian's "The Dead Fish," outstanding among a collection of good stories in the anthology edited and translated by Damon Knight, *13 French Science Fiction Stories* (Bantam).

Nor have I mentioned Cordwainer Smith's *Space Lords* collection, memorable not only for the stories, but for the author's instructive and revealing prologue, in which he explains, in part, just what it is that is different about Smith stories. Required reading for would-be s-f writers (and for many who already are)—as is Brian Aldiss' long, thoughtful analysis of three British writers in *SF Horizons No. 2.*

And there are some other British writers, not all new-in-1965, but names still unfamiliar here, which I suspect will not be so for long: William Barclay, John Baxter, Daphne Castell, Robert Cheetham, Jael Cracken, John Hamilton, David Harvey, R. W. Mackleworth, Dikk Richardson, David Newton, Bob Parkinson, E. C. Williams.

* * * *

One way and another, I keep coming back to it. The important things happening in American s-f are not happening *in* it at all. We have writers comparable to Ballard in stature, for instance—but not in current achievement, and certainly not in influence within the field. Cordwainer Smith and Theodore Sturgeon have each published two new stories in the last eighteen months or so—and none of them close to the authors' best work. Leiber has been productive: a *Tarzan* novelization, and thousands of words of magazine stories, some of them very good reading, all rather closer in period to *Tarzan* than to Leiber's own work of a few years back ("Mariana," "A Deskfui of Girls," "The Secret Songs," "The Silver Eggheads," *The Wanderer)*. Nothing at all from Alfred Bester for three years now, nor from Walter Miller for much, much longer. Kurt Vonnegut continues to do a novel every year or two that almost makes up for the rest of what's missing —but he is not in the same sense a part of the field here at all; his impact on other American writers is almost more from "outside" than Ballard's.

The novel generally acclaimed as the best American product last year was Frank Herbert's Dune—a long, and in part excellent, but

completely conventional future-historical, admirable essentially for its complexity rather than for any original or speculative contribution. Certainly there is nothing in it to stimulate or influence the work of others.

As it happens, the stimulus is being provided from outside—and not just from England. It is coming from exciting new work in psychology and the allied sciences; from the *avant-gardistes* and poets who have begun using the images and contexts of s-f with or without concern for the sources; and from the impact of the belated translation and publication of people like Borges and Jarry.

* * * *

It is interesting to speculate on what the difference in our thinking and writing might have been, if we had had Jarry as part of the s-f tradition, along with Verne and Wells. Jarry himself was reading these men as they wrote: Verne in his childhood. Wells in his prime. He responded to Wells (See "How to Construct a Time Machine" in the Selected *Works),* but also *with* Wells, to the scientific discoveries of the turn of the century. In a sense, he is Jules Verne's left hand, as Wells might be the right.

But if we had had Jarry, would we have read him? From today's vantage point, a hectic half century of scientific revolutions and upheavals later, Jarry's responses are rather more in keeping with the direction of physics itself than were Wells' marvelously sane and rational civilized adductions.

But how long have we been prepared to see this? Did we not have to work our way (with pleasure) through Gernsback and "scientifiction" to Campbell's then-revolutionary 1938-1942 magazines, and then from E. E. Smith to Heinlein, Leiber, and Asimov —and again, to Boucher's revolutionary notion that a science-fantasy magazine could be *well-written*—to Bester, Miller, Budrys, Cordwainer Smith—before we were ready for either *Cat's Cradle or* "Terminal Beach?"

* * * *

Or if Borges had been translated as he wrote, if the eight stories in *Ficciones (Fictions)* had been available in 1941, instead of 1962 . . .

I remember vividly the excitement of discovering *The Star Maker* and Odd *John* in the early '40s; Stapledon opened tantalizing and terrifying vistas of probability for me. For others, it may have been C.

S. Lewis, or M. P. Shiel, or E. R. Eddison; but there is no question that the impact of these powerful imaginative thinkers on a whole generation of writers was one of the major forces that moved s-f out of the technocratic-primitivism of "scientifiction" to the sociological-sci-fi of the "great days" of *Astounding* and *Unknown,* and further, to the psychological/semantic/psychiatric science-fantasy of the early years of *Galaxy* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction.*

But that was as far as the impetus of that group of brilliant apologists of dualism could take us. The next step we had to reach—are only now reaching—essentially by bootstrap-climbing. So it seems cruelly ironic now to discover that our newest concepts, painfully evolved over a quarter century of speculative interchange from the combined traditions of magic and mathematics, physics and poetry, were already set down—in essays, stories, poems, allegories, sometimes unabashed plot outlines—before we were fairly started on the process, by one man drawing on the whole range of aesthetic/intellectual traditions that have since filtered through to us, from a dozen different sources.

Would we have arrived any sooner, or any saner, at the crossroads of communication where we now stand—where poet and pragmatist, scientist and surrealist, are equally frequently disconcerted to see themselves mirrored in each other's eyes—would we have come to this gathering place, the converging of the many roads toward "reality" traveled by twentieth-century thought, any more readily for the guidance of one brilliant mind far ahead?

Or did we have to get this far ourselves before we could make out the meaning of the light? Did Borges' work, and Jarry's, simply have to wait for the rest of us to catch up? Perhaps we had to go the Zen route before we could contemplate the statement, " 'Pataphysics is *the* science ..." with equanimity (let alone delight), and wail for our learned Academies to convene Conferences on the nature of time before Borges' "Tlon Uqbar, Tertius Orbis" became comprehensible?

Perhaps we did. Perhaps each cultural island—whether a nation, genre, discipline, or single man—must grow its own way through the stages of naive rationalism and hardware sophistication, before it can approach the recognition of the inalienable association between the concurrent-and-diverse "realities" of physics and metaphysics, mathematics and mysticism, psyche and soma, science and art.

Judith Merril
Milford, 1966